DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 433 909 PS 027 143

AUTHOR	Wolkoff, Sandra, Ed.; Schwartzberg, Neala S., Ed.
TITLE	Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics, 1995-1998.
INSTITUTION	Lindner Early Childhood Training Inst., Roslyn Heights, NY.
ISSN	ISSN-0887-0365
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	305p.; Published monthly. Volume 11 has only 10 issues. Many issues have "en Espanol" versions appended.
AVAILABLE FROM	North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center, 480 Old Westbury Road, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215 (English Edition, $30 for 1-year subscription; English/Spanish Edition, $40 for 1-year subscription). Tel: 800-595-9365 (Toll Free); Tel: 516-626-1971; Fax: 516-626-8043.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Multilingual/Bilingual Materials (171)
LANGUAGE	English, Spanish
JOURNAL CIT	Parent and Preschooler Newsletter; v9 n11-v13 n11 Jan 1995-Dec 1998
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Anxiety; Brain; Child Development; Child Health; *Child Rearing; Depression (Psychology); Emotional Development; Learning Activities; Newsletters; Nutrition Instruction; Parent Child Relationship; *Parenting Skills; Play; *Preschool Children; *Preschool Education; Reliability; World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS	Brain Development; Daily Routines

ABSTRACT

This document consists of 47 consecutive issues of the "Parent and Preschooler Newsletter." This newsletter is variously subtitled "A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics" and "An International Resource for Professionals and Parents." Regularly appearing features are: "Library Resources," "Preschoolers in the Kitchen PLUS," "Websites for Parents," and "The Doctor's Corner." (KB)

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ED 433 909

Parent and Preschooler Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

January 1995 – December 1998

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Volume 9, Number 11 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | *January 1995*

Setting rules for young children . . .

Three-year-old Jason is hitting his eighteen-month-old brother. His mother says, "You shouldn't hit your brother — you're bigger than he is." As a punishment she gives Jason a swat and a ten minute time out. A little later on he does it all over again. His mother doesn't know what to do. (*Rule: Don't hit.*)

Two-year-old Nancy wants the free candy on the counter in the video store. Her mother tells her, "No! It's almost lunch time." But Nancy keeps reaching for it. Finally, she makes a wild grab for the candy and it goes flying across the counter. An embarrassed mother makes a hurried exit as the child begins to scream. *(Rule: No sweets before a meal.)*

Five-year-old Kevin goes to the mall with his father. The boy asks his father for a dollar to play video games. Dad gives him the dollar and says "This is all you get." After he spends the money Kevin asks for more. When his father says, "No." Kevin starts to kick the machine. *(Rule: When there's an agreement about limits, it should be accepted.)*

Parenting and rules

Experiences like these are shared by parents everywhere. To avoid such confrontations parents should have consistent, reliable rules that every family member can live with.

Rules are as necessary to a family as the rules of the road are to driving a car. Driving rules help us remain safe and secure through all kinds of conditions: rain, sleet, snow, emergencies, etc. Just as everyone who drives is expected to follow the rules of the road, everyone in the family is expected to follow the rules of the family. **Effective rules** (described below) have the following characteristics:

- They are considerate of your child's self-esteem
- They are consistent, repetitive, and follow a routine
- They take into account your child's age and development
- They can be explained and understood
- They are flexible according to the environment
- They can include input from children as well as parents
- They teach

Effective rules are considerate of your child's self-esteem

What your child thinks of himself is important to consider when you establish a rule. Ask yourself "How will this rule affect my child's feeling of self worth?" For example, in the incident described above it is important to have a rule that says that Jason can't hurt his younger brother. But, it is also important for Jason to feel that he is getting his fair share of his parent's attention.

Andrea is five years old and her brother Kenneth is seven. When Kenneth comes home from school he needs quiet so that he can do his homework. However, Andrea wants to talk and play. Because she would not be quiet and let her brother do his homework, her parents were getting frustrated and made the rule: *Andrea must keep quiet while Kenneth does his work.* However, the rule was hurting Andrea's self- esteem because she felt that her needs were not as important as Kenneth's. After thinking it over the rule was changed to: *Andrea will read a book with Mommy and then play by herself until Kenneth finishes his homework.* This rule was effective because both Andrea and Kenneth had their needs met.

continued >>>>>

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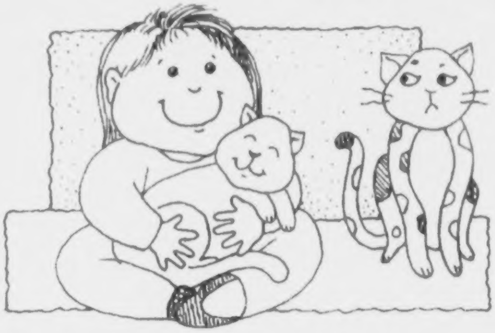
Effective rules are consistent, repetitive, and follow a routine

Rules should be consistent for all. When Jason's mother hit him (see above) for hitting someone smaller than himself she was being inconsistent. If Jason is bigger than his brother — Jason's mother is bigger than Jason. The rule is *don't hit* .

Repetition and routines teach rules. If your child is required to make his bed, daily repetition of the act of making up the bed will reinforce the rule. After a time it becomes a norm (a rule that is accepted as part of life).
When dinner is over Judy, who is a working mother, doesn't want to be the only person left in the kitchen cleaning up. In order to prevent that from happening the rule is *everyone helps to clear the table after dinner.* For Julie, 3 years old, and Allen, 5 years old, the rule has become a part of their daily routine.

Effective rules take into account your child's age and development

The age of the child, and stage of development must be taken into account. A two year old's needs and abilities are very different from those of a four year old. In addition, even children within the same age group differ from each other.
In the above example two-year-old Nancy wanted the candy on the counter. Her mother said "No, It's almost lunch time." The rule was *No sweets before a meal.* Nancy was developmentally not ready to understand the concept of time. She is in the process of developing her self-assertiveness, beginning to learn about limits and choices. Her mother's expectations for her, at that moment, were incompatible with the child's stage of development. On the other hand, the rule for five-year-old Kevin was appropriate for his age. The rule is *When there's an agreement about limits, it should be accepted.* At his age he has experienced, learned, and incorporated the concept of choices and limits. Kevin's reaction to his father saying, "No," is an indication that he needs structure and consistent limits in order to continue to develop self-control.



Effective rules can be explained and understood

"Why do I have to?" "Because I said so" is the typical response but not the best choice. Going back to driving the car, understanding why we have to stop at a red light makes it much easier to accept the rule. If you don't stop you can cause an accident.

Explaining rules can be a frustrating experience for many parents, especially if the child continually asks "Why???" However, if the rules can be explained with valid reasons for their use it is easier to follow them. For instance, our next door neighbor is a 2 1/2-year-old girl named Alex. She loves coming to our house to play with our cats. I carefully explained to her that Stimpy, the gold cat, loves to be held and petted, but Rebecca, the colorful cat, will scratch and hurt her if she is held. At our house we tell all the children "Don't pet Rebecca." Alex, who is always holding Stimpy, understands the rule very well and tells everyone *"Stimpy, yes — Rebecca, NO!"*

Effective rules are flexible according to the environment

The behavior expected in a restaurant is different from what is tolerated in the playground. The environment plays a key role in rule development. Talitha takes her son, four-year-old Andrew, to a play group three times a week. During free play he promptly runs to the jump on the trampoline, which he loves. Immediately, upon returning home, Andrew runs into his mother's room, climbs on her bed and begins jumping. Talitha stops Andrew from jumping and explains the rule: *Jumping is allowed on the trampoline at play group, but we do not jump on beds.*

Effective rules can include input from children

Because the rule has to be important to the people who are going to abide by it, young children can help create workable rules. In our house, for example, the members of the family felt that they could enter our five-year-old daughter's room anytime they wished. She didn't like this and proposed the rule that anyone wanting to enter must knock on her door three times. It was important for her own sense of power and privacy that everyone follow her rule. It had meaning for her. In different situations, each child has helped develop other family rules.

Effective rules teach

Parents need to ask themselves the following questions regarding rules for their children. *What do I want them to learn? Why do I want them to learn this?* and *What is the best way to teach them?*

Rules teach children many things: how to care, share, negotiate, and be safe, to mention a few. For example, Amy and Fran, two three-year-old friends, are playing with dolls. Amy grabs the doll Fran is playing with and Fran bursts into tears. Amy's mother tells her daughter, "That made Fran sad. If you want the doll that Fran has, why don't you ask her if you could trade dolls for a while." Amy's mom is teaching her to care, share, and negotiate.

Rules are the guideposts that keep our children going in the right direction. They are there to protect, support and guide their way, much in the same way that the rules of the road guide our travels. Rules don't determine the destiny of the journey — they just help us get there in one piece. Rules are there to help our children both in the present and the future.

Pegine Echevarria, MSW, lectures and consults on parent issues, parent involvement, and conducts Minority Motivational Seminars. She is recognized for her enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and interesting presentations. She is currently writing a book on parent involvement.

**Coming in February:
Helping Your Child
to Eat Well**

**Available in
English Language
and
English/Spanish Language
Editions**

For Adults

The Parents' Resource Almanac, by Beth DeFrancis. Bob Adams, Inc., (260 Center St., Holbrook MA 02343), 1994. A useful compilation of resources for parents with descriptions of books, magazines, newsletters, etc., on a myriad of topics, including many listings about discipline and setting limits.

Resources for Early Childhood: A Handbook, edited by Hannah Nuba, Michael Searson, & Deborah Lovitky Sheiman. Garland, 1994. Along with its many listings of books and articles on the subject of child development, this important book includes an essay at the beginning of each chapter on a variety of themes, each written by an expert in the field.

For Children
Books About Behavior

The Strange Blue Creature, by Paul Borovsky. Hyperion, 1993. A strange, hungry, blue creature comes to a tiny kingdom, and gobbles up crayons wherever he finds them. The princess shouts at him, the school children are afraid of him, even the soldiers run from him, but he continues to eat every crayon in sight. He finally attacks the crayon factory, where the princess confronts him. "Do you know what crayons are for?" she asks. And she shows him how to draw, with hilarious and positive results.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Annie and Cousin Precious, by Kay Chorao. Dutton, 1994. It's hard for Annie to be a good hostess when Cousin Precious comes for a visit, since Cousin Precious keeps bossing Annie and ruining her toys. How Annie and her cousin confront each other and (almost) get to like each other is the satisfying ending to this story.

Walter's Tail, by Lisa Campbell Ernst. Bradbury Press, 1992. Mrs. Tully gets a puppy for company and calls him Walter. He is cute, and his tail keeps wagging. As Walter grows bigger, that wagging tail causes many disasters, knocking over nails in the hardware store, lemon balls in the candy shop, and even a fancy wedding cake at the bakery. Everyone in town tells Mrs. Tully to get rid of that dog, until Walter becomes the town hero, wagging tail and all.

Owen, by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow, 1993. Owen is going to start school. That's fine with him, as long as he can take along his fuzzy blanket. He had kept it close to him ever since he was a baby, and he isn't going to give it up. Nothing that Owen's mother or father can say or do will change Owen's mind. But Owen's mother solves the problem with an absolutely wonderful idea — and it works!

Three-Star Billy, by Pat Hutchins. Greenwillow, 1994. Billy, a monster, is starting monster nursery school but he doesn't want to go. His sister tells him that he will get a star if he's good. Billy doesn't want to be good. He flings the paint at the easel, and his teacher says is painting is the most terrible, monstrous painting she's ever seen. And she gives Billy a star. More stars come to him as he sings, making a dreadful noise — as he dances, stamping so hard that he frightens everyone, and on through the day at monster nursery school. At the end, like many preschoolers who are not little monsters, when his parents come for him, he doesn't want to go home.

Amelia Bedelia, *An I Can Read Book®.* by Peggy Parish. HarperTrophy edition, 1992. Lovable, willing Amelia Bedelia, is the heroine of many books by this author. This is the first in the series, introducing the literal-minded housekeeper who does *exactly* what her employers tell her to do, with comical consequences.

Mind Your Manners, by Peggy Parish. Mulberry edition, 1994. Manners do matter and this book, with its humorous illustrations by Marylin Hafner, gives children specific suggestions for telephone manners, table manners, how to behave during sleep-overs, etc..

Benny Bakes a Cake, by Eve Rice. Greenwillow, 1981 (reissued in 1993). In this charming story that toddlers will love, it's Benny's birthday, and he helps Mama bake his cake. But his dog Ralph has an eye on the cake, and when Benny and Mama turn their backs, Ralph knocks the cake to the floor. Benny cries and cries, until Daddy saves the day with a new cake, and the story ends with everybody singing *Happy Birthday.*

The Lemonade Babysitter, by Karen Waggoner. Little, Brown, 1992. Molly thinks she's too big to have a babysitter, so when old Mr. Herbert from down the street comes to take care of her, Molly tries to think of things Mr. Herbert would never want to do, so that he won't come back ever again. But both the little girl and the old man find they have more in common than one would imagine.

Skip to My Lou, adapted and illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott. Joy Street/ Little, Brown, 1989. When a farm family leaves their little boy in charge for the day, the animals take over the house and make a terrible mess. There is a happy ending to this funny story as they help him clean up just before his parents arrive home. The music to the song *Skip to My Lou* is included.

Big Black Bear, by Wong Herbert Yee. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993. When Big Black Bear comes out of the wood, and visits the house on Sycamore Street, a little girl answers the door. Big Black Bear isn't polite, and won't listen to the little girl's rules about wiping his feet, or covering his mouth when he sneezes. But an even bigger black bear arrives just in time to teach him good manners.

Bibliography by
Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Start the Year With Spinach

Do you remember watching the cartoon "Popeye?" Popeye the sailor was always saved by the strength he gained after eating a can of spinach. Even though this is an exaggeration of its benefits, spinach is a good source of vitamin A, iron, and fiber.

Spinach is one vegetable grown-ups can have mixed feelings about, comparing nutrition to taste. I believe the problem lies in the way spinach is prepared and served. Some people like spinach simply cooked and served with margarine or vinegar. Preschoolers and adults might love the taste of spinach baked in a casserole with cheese, brimming in a savory pie, fresh as the lettuce in a salad, or layered between the noodles in lasagna. Once you find a spinach recipe you and your family enjoy, you will benefit not only from the good nutrition it provides, but also from its unique taste.
Why not start out the year by trying some tempting new spinach recipes with your preschooler?

Spinach 'n Cheese Casserole

1 cup cooked spinach
(either 1-lb. fresh or
10-oz. frozen)
4 eggs
1 cup milk
1 cup shredded Swiss cheese
1 cup cubed white bread
1/4 cup grated
Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease a 1-quart casserole. Drain spinach in a strainer; let preschooler help press out excess liquid with a spoon. Place spinach in a bowl. Add eggs; beat until combined. Preschooler can help stir in milk, cheeses, and bread cubes. Pour into casserole. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until set. Yield: 4-6 servings.

Spinach Quiche

9-inch pie shell
1/2 pound tofu or 8-oz. carton
cottage cheese
1/4 cup oil
1/4 cup milk
4 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup Monterey Jack cheese
1 cup cooked spinach
(either 1-lb. fresh or
10-oz. frozen)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Using an electric mixer, beat tofu or cottage cheese and oil until smooth. Put away mixer. Let preschooler help measure and stir in the milk, eggs, salt , and cheese. Drain spinach in a strainer; let preschooler help press out excess liquid with a spoon. Add to cheese mixture. Pour into pie shell and bake 45 minutes or until set. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting. Yield: 6-8 servings.

Farmer's Salad

1 head lettuce
1 romaine lettuce
1/2 pound fresh spinach
2 tomatoes
1 red onion
1 cucumber
2 carrots
1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup sour cream
salt and pepper to taste

Have a large bowl for the salad. Add each ingredient to the bowl after preparing. Preschoolers can help with lettuce and spinach. Tear lettuce into pieces. Rinse and drain. To wash spinach: place in a bowl of cold water. Swish. Sand will fall to the bottom of the bowl. Remove spinach from bowl by handfuls; place in colander to drain. Then discard sandy water. Cut each tomato into 8 wedges. Slice onion thinly in rings. Pare and slice cucumber. Pare and shred carrots. Chill salad. Before serving, toss salad with a dressing of sour cream, cottage cheese, salt and pepper to taste.

Spinach Lasagna

12 lasagna noodles
2 cups (1-lb.) ricotta or
cottage cheese
1 cup mozzarella cheese
2 tablespoons grated
Parmesan cheese
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups spaghetti sauce
1 cup cooked spinach
(either 1-lb. fresh or
10-oz. frozen)

Cook lasagna noodles in boiling water according to package directions. Drain and cool by placing flat on tin foil. Preheat oven to 350°.
In a medium-sized bowl, preschoolers can help mix together ricotta or cottage cheese, 3/4 cup mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese, egg, parsley and salt.
Drain spinach in a strainer; let preschooler help press out excess liquid with a spoon.
In a 9x9 pan, spoon about 1/4 cup spaghetti sauce. Arrange 4 lasagna noodles, slightly overlapping, over sauce.
Trim noodles to fit in pan; reserve to make last layer.
Spread 1/3 of cheese mixture over noodles, then 1/3 of spinach, and about 1/4 cup sauce. Repeat twice, ending with noodles. Top with remaining sauce and the 1/4 cup mozzarella cheese. Cover with foil. Bake 35 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Remove foil and bake 10 more minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Yield: 4-6 servings.
Note: you may add 1 pound cooked ground beef to spaghetti sauce, if desired.

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one-or two-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order
made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues
on request.)
©1995 Preschool
Publications, Inc.
Printed in U.S.A.

Subscription Rates
(U.S., Canada & Mexico)
English Language Edition
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
English/Spanish
Language Edition
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
All other countries
add postage
US$12 for 1 year
US$24 for 2 years

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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de enero, edición del 1995 (volumne 9, número 11) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envíe toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Fijando reglas para los niños . . .

Jason, de tres años, le está pegando a su hermano de 18 meses de edad. Su madre le dice. "No le debieras pegar a tu hermano — eres más grande que él." Como castigo, le da una palmada a Jason y le da diez minutos de penitencia. Un rato después, Jason vuelve a hacer lo mismo. Su madre no sabe qué hacer. *(Regla: No pegar.)*

Nancy de dos años de edad quiere los caramelos que hay en el mostrador de la tienda de videos. Su madre le dice, "No, ya casi es hora de almuerzo." Pero Nancy sigue tratando de tomarlos. Finalmente, Nancy bruscamente trata de coger uno y lo hace volar por encima del mostrador. La madre avergonzada sale rápidamente de la tienda mientras la niña comienza a gritar. *(Regla: No a los caramelos antes de las comidas.)*

Kevin, de cinco años, va al centro comercial con su padre. Le pide al padre que le dé un dólar para los juegos de videos. El padre se lo da y dice, "Eso es todo lo que tendrás." Luego de haber gastado todo, Kevin pide más. Cuando su padre le dice, "No," Kevin comienza a patear la máquina. *(Regla: Cuando hay un acuerdo, éste debe ser aceptado.)*

Ser padre y las reglas

Muchos padres comparten este tipo de experiencias. Para evitar este tipo de enfrentamientos, los padres deben tener reglas consistentes y confiables con las que cada miembro de la familia pueda vivir.

Para una familia las reglas son tan necesarias como lo son las normas del camino para conducir un vehículo. Las reglas para conducir nos ayudan a mantenernos seguros en cualquier estado del tiempo: lluvia, granizo, aguanieve, nevazones, emergencias, etc. Así como se espera que todos los que manejen sigan las reglas del camino, en un familia se espera que cada miembro siga las reglas familiares.

Las reglas efectivas

(descritas abajo) tienen las siguientes características:

- Consideran la autoestima de su hijo.
- Son consecuentes, repetitivas y siguen un patrón rutinario.
- Toman en cuenta la edad y la etapa del desarrollo de su hijo.
- Son flexibles de acuerdo al entorno.
- Pueden incluir el aporte de los niños como también de los padres.
- Pueden ser explicadas y entendidas.
- Enseñan.

Las reglas efectivas consideran la autoestima del niño

Cuando se establecen reglas, es importante tomar en cuenta lo que su niño piensa de sí mismo. Pregúntese, "¿Cómo afectará esta regla en el sentido de autoestima de mi hijo?" Por ejemplo, en el incidente descrito más arriba, es importante tener una regla que dice que Jason no le puede pegar a su hermano menor. Pero también es importante que Jason sienta que sus padres le están dando una cuota justa de atención.

Andrea tiene cinco años y su hermano Kenneth tiene siete. Cuando él llega de la escuela, el necesita silencio para hacer sus tareas. Sin embargo, Andrea quiere jugar y conversar. En vista que no se callaba y no dejaba que su hermano hiciera sus tareas, sus padres comenzaron a disgustarse y establecieron una regla: *Andrea debe mantener silencio mientras Kenneth hace su trabajo.* Pero la regla estaba dañando la autoestima de Andrea porque sentía que sus necesidades no eran tan importantes como las de Kenneth. Luego de pensar, la regla se cambió a: *Andrea leerá un libro con su mamá y luego jugará sola hasta que Kenneth termine sus tareas.* Esta regla fue efectiva porque tanto Andrea como Kenneth vieron satisfechas sus necesidades.

Las reglas efectivas son consecuentes, repetitivas, y siguen un patrón rutinario

Las reglas deberían ser consecuentes para todos. Cuando la madre de Jason le pegó (ver arriba) por haber golpeado a alguien menor, estaba siendo inconsecuente. Si Jason es más grande que su hermano — la madre es más grande que Jason. La regla es *no pegar.*

continuará >>>>>>

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La repetición y la rutina enseñan reglas. Si usted le pide al niño que haga su cama todos los días, la repetición diaria de este acto reforzará la regla. Luego de un tiempo se transforma en norma (una regla que es aceptada como forma de vida). Cuando la cena termina, Judy, una madre que también trabaja, no quiere ser la única en limpiar la cocina. Para evitar que esto suceda, la regla es que *todos deben ayudar a limpiar después de la cena.* Para Julie de tres años y Allen de cinco, la regla se ha convertido en parte de su rutina diaria.

Las reglas efectivas toman en cuenta la edad y la etapa del desarrollo del niño

Se debe tomar en cuenta la edad del niño y su etapa del desarrollo. Las habilidades y las necesidades de un niño de dos años son diferentes a las de un niño de cuatro. Incluso, niños de la misma edad son diferentes. En el ejemplo de arriba, Nancy de dos años quería el caramelo del mostrador. Su madre dijo, "No, es casi hora de almuerzo." La regla era: *No hay caramelos antes de las comidas.* Nancy no tenía desarrollo suficiente como para entender el concepto de tiempo. Está en el proceso de desarrollar seguridad en sí misma, comenzando a aprender sobre límites y opciones. Las expectativas de la madre en ese momento, eran incompatibles con el nivel de desarrollo de su hija.

Por otro lado, para Kevin de cinco años, la regla era apropiada para su edad. Las regla es, *Cuando hay un acuerdo, debe ser aceptado.* A su edad ha experimentado, aprendido e incorporado el concepto de opciones y límites. La reacción de Kevin ante el "No" de su padre, es una indicación de que necesita estructura y límites consecuentes para poder continuar desarrollando su auto-control.

Las reglas efectivas son flexibles de acuerdo al entorno

El comportamiento esperado en un restaurante es distinto del que se espera en el parque de juegos. El entorno juega un papel clave en el desarrollo de las reglas. Talitha lleva a su hijo Andrew, de cuatro años, a un grupo de juego tres veces por semana. Durante el juego libre, Andrew corre para saltar sobre el trampolín que tanto le gusta. Al regresar a casa, Andrew corre al cuarto de su madre, se sube a la cama y comienza a saltar. Talitha detiene a Andrew y le explica la regla: *El saltar está permitido en el trampolín, pero no saltamos sobre las camas.*

Las reglas efectivas pueden incluir el aporte de los niños

Debido a que las reglas tienen que ser importantes para las personas que las aceptan, los niños pueden ayudar a crear reglas más factibles. Por ejemplo, en nuestra casa, los miembros de la familia pensaron que podían entrar al cuarto de nuestra hija de cinco años, cuando lo deseaban. Esto a ella no le gustaba y propuso que el que quisiera entrar al cuarto debia golpear tres veces. Era importante para su propio sentido de poder y privacidad, que todos siguieran esta regla. Tenía sentido para ella. En situaciones diferentes, cada niño ha ayudado en la creación de otras reglas para la familia.

Las reglas efectivas pueden explicarse y ser entendidas

"¿Por qué tengo que hacer esto?" "Porque yo lo digo," es una respuesta típica pero no es la mejor opción. Retomando el ejemplo de conducir un automóvil, entender porqué tenemos que detenernos ante una luz roja hace más fácil aceptar la regla. Si no paro, puedo provocar un accidente.

El explicar reglas puede ser una tarea poco satisfactoria para muchos padres, especialmente si el niño continua preguntando "¿Pero, por qué?" Sin embargo, si las reglas se explican con razones válidas para su aplicación, es más fácil seguirlas. Por ejemplo, nuestra vecina es una niña de dos años y medio llamada Alex. Le fascina venir a nuestra casa para jugar con los gatos. Le expliqué cuidadosamente que a Stimpy, el gato dorado, le gustaba ser tomado en brazos y acariciado, pero Rebeca, el gato colorido, arañaba y hacía daño si se la tomaba en brazos. En nuestra casa le decimos a todos los niños "No acaricien a Rebeca." Alex, que siempre está tomando a Stimpy entiende la regla muy bien y le dice a todo el mundo, *"Stimpy, sí- Rebeca, NO!"*

Las reglas efectivas enseñan.

Los padres tienen que preguntarse las siguientes preguntas sobre de las reglas para sus hijos. *¿Qué es lo que quiero que aprendan?, ¿Cuál es la mejor manera de enseñarles?*

Las reglas le enseñan a los niños muchas cosas: a preocuparse, a compartir, a negociar y a sentirse seguros, por citar algunas. Por ejemplo, Amy y Fran, dos niñas de tres años, están jugando con muñecas. Amy agarra la muñeca con la que está jugando Fran y ella empieza a llorar. La madre de Amy le dice "Eso hizo que Fran se pusiera triste. Si quieres la muñeca que tiene Fran, por qué no le preguntas si pueden intercambiar las muñecas por un momento." La madre de Amy le está enseñando a preocuparse, compartir y negociar.

Las reglas son las guías que hacen que nuestros niños sigan la dirección correcta. Están ahí para proteger, apoyar y guiar su camino, de la misma forma en que las reglas de las carreteras guían nuestro viaje. Las reglas no determinan el destino del viaje pero nos ayudan a llegar ahí de una vez. Las reglas están para ayudar a nuestros niños tanto en el presente como en el futuro.

Pegine Echevarria, MSW, es conferencista y realiza consultorías en temas para padres, participación y rol de los padres, y dirige Seminarios de Incentivo para Grupos de Minoría. Es reconocida por sus interesantes, entusiastas y detalladas presentaciones. Actualmente escribe un libro sobre participación y rol de los padres.

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Volume 9, Number 12 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* **February 1995**

Helping your child to eat well . . .

Zachary, age two, climbs eagerly into his high chair, folds his arms and announces, "I won't eat." His mother desperately replies, "But you *have* to eat. Have a spoonful. Look, here comes the airplane into the hangar. Mayday! Mayday!"
At the table his four-year-old sister, Emily, whines, "How many bites of broccoli before I get my cookie?"
Sound familiar?

We all want our children to be "good eaters." We want eating times to be happy times. But sometimes they're not. What can we do? Here's advice from Ellyn Satter, author, lecturer, registered dietitian, and family therapist specializing in the treatment of eating disorders.

Trust is the key

"A healthy, positive feeding relationship with your child," says Satter, "grows out of trust: trust in her ability to eat in a way that's right for her and to develop the body that's right for her. Feeding is a cooperative process, not one of outsmarting your child."

How children eat

Preschoolers who are good eaters don't act like adults. They may eat a lot one day, and practically nothing the next. They may like a food today, but not tomorrow. Preschoolers typically don't eat everything at a meal—they stick to one or two foods. And they're very sensitive to their hunger and appetite. They will even stop in the middle of a bowl of ice cream if they get full.

Who's in charge?

The best parenting—including parenting with food—provides love and limits. Satter's golden role for feeding children is her **division of responsibility**: Parents are responsible for **what** food is offered, and (for children more than 12 months old) **when** and **where** it is offered. Children decide **how much**, and even **whether** to eat. Let's look at how this works:

Parents' Responsibilities

• You are the gatekeeper on food selection.
You decide what food comes into the house and goes on the table. After all, you know more about food, and about eating, than your preschooler. He wants and needs to learn from you.
Put four or five foods on the table at mealtime: a meat or other protein source, milk, a fruit or vegetable or both, bread and another complex carbohydrate (potatoes, rice, spaghetti), and butter or margarine, and let your child pick and choose from what's available. Don't limit the menu to foods your preschooler accepts, but be sure to include one food that he usually likes. Always offer bread—he can eat that when all else fails.

• You are the timekeeper on feeding time.
You decide when to offer meals and snacks. Your child's stomach is small and his energy needs are high. So, he needs three meals a day with planned snacks in between to bring the feeding intervals down to about every two or three hours.
Don't let your preschooler have food or beverages at other times: that puts him in charge of the menu, as well as the timing. Offer water for thirst. If he grazes constantly—even on nutritious food or juice—he won't be hungry enough at mealtime to learn to eat a variety of foods.

• You decide where.
Feeding preschoolers only at the table teaches them to take eating seriously. It also keeps you from giving food handouts for skinned knees, hurt feelings, or general crankiness (this teaches him to eat when he gets upset).

• It's up to you to make it friendly.

- Have family meals. Your preschooler needs to eat with you, even if it's more peaceful without her.
- Make mealtimes pleasant: Don't scold or argue.
- Let your preschooler eat in his own way—within reason. When "exploring" food becomes simply messing around to get you to react, let him get down from the table.
- Modify food so your preschooler can eat it (for example: make food moist, cut meat finely).
- Help your preschooler pay attention to his eating. To eat well, your child should be calm, rested, and hungry. Leave the television off—TV distracts him from eating and interferes with family social time.

continued >>>>>

In This Issue: How to Feed Your Preschooler...2; Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

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Children's Responsibilities

For the division of responsibility to work, your child must also do her part. She decides:

- **How much she eats**
- **Whether she eats**

Children know how much they need to eat. Every child grows differently, and every child needs a different amount of food. Some days your child is hungry, some days not. Some days she is active, some days not. If you let your child follow her internal sense of hunger, appetite, and fullness, she'll eat the amount she needs to grow the way nature intended. If you get pushy with food, she can't eat well.

Your child's body

Some children are naturally tall and slender, others are more solid and muscular, still others are on the fat side. Your child's body type is determined mostly by heredity.

Don't compare your child's growth with that of other children. If he follows predictably along one of the standard curves on his growth chart, he's doing fine. Your child shouldn't suddenly shift up or down from his usual curve. If he does, consult your doctor — something is disrupting his growth.

Supporting without managing

Children always do better when they are in control of their own eating. Forcing backfires: Children eat *less*, not more. Let your preschooler turn down foods she doesn't want. Let her know she may taste a food and then not finish it. Let her decide when she's hungry and when she's full.

Trusting your child to eat frees you to enjoy her. If you stop worrying about getting food into her, you can pay attention, instead, to sharing her delight in learning to eat, to watching her growth unfold, and to doing a good job with parenting.

These featured articles outline ideas from Ellyn Satter's book, *How to Get Your Kid to Eat . . But Not Too Much,* and other materials (see Library Resources page) and was prepared by Paulette Bochnig Sharkey, developmental editor for Ellyn Satter Associates.

You can eat as much as you want

How to feed your preschooler

How to feed your toddler

Your toddler needs control over his own world. He also needs limits, to make his world the size he can handle. With eating, that means you choose the menu that's safe and nutritious; you choose the times for eating. Then let your child decide how much to eat, even when he eats very little.

• Help him learn to like new foods

Toddlers don't like new foods, but they *learn* to like them if they have time and experience. Let your toddler see the new food on the table; let him see you eat it. If you don't pressure him, eventually he will *taste* it. He'll take it back out of his mouth, but don't despair! He's not rejecting the food, he's getting used to it. He'll do this many times, until he knows the food well enough to swallow it—and like it.

• Choose your battles

You can get your toddler to come to the table, but you can't make him eat. Don't beg, bribe ("Eat your broccoli and you can have dessert"), threaten, or play games ("Here comes the choo-choo"). Show your child that you won't try to *make* him eat, and he will likely go ahead and do it on his own. But you have to mean it—he'll know if you're trying to trick him.

• Don't cater to food jags

Your child may go through food jags when he wants to eat the same thing all the time. Planning meals ahead makes food jags less of a problem. If you ask your toddler what he wants to eat, he'll demand his favorite food. So don't ask. Let him choose from what is offered at the table like the rest of the family.

• Don't short-order cook

When your toddler says he doesn't like the meal, ignore it, or say "Oh, okay." Don't jump up to short-order cook something else (that gives your child control of the menu). Have his milk at his place and some bread on the table, help him serve himself, and let him eat—or not eat.

How to feed your three to five year old

Your three to five year old wants to grow up with eating as much as she wants to learn to ride a bike and write her name. She pays attention to what *you* do. When she sees you eating green beans, she figures that she'll someday eat green beans, too.

• Don't pressure your child to eat

Your child probably isn't as afraid to try new foods now as she was when she was a toddler. And she'll no longer assume that if the taste is different, it's bad. Still, don't *force* your child to eat, or even persuade her in a "nice" way ("Come on, just one bite"). Children also like foods less when they're given rewards for eating them. Perhaps they reason, "If my parents have to give me something to make me eat this, it must not be so good."

Reassure your child that she doesn't have to eat anything she doesn't want to. You can say, "When you get a little older, you'll probably like this." You might tell her that trying a little bit, lots of times, can help her learn to like foods. But don't insist. Take your child's word for it when she says she really doesn't want to eat something.

• Accept some food waste

Your food waste will go up with a child at your table. She won't be very good at estimating how much she'll eat. She'll take food on her plate and eat just a bit, or none at all. You can remind her, gently, not to take so much, but you shouldn't make her clean her plate.

• Respect eating quirks

Your child might love a sandwich cut in triangles, but refuse to eat the same sandwich cut in squares. She isn't trying to bug you—this is normal three- to five-year-old behavior. Respecting her wishes won't spoil her or make her finicky.

continued >>>>>

Teach your child how to behave at the table

If you let your child misbehave at meals, she won't learn how to eat with others. Your three to five year old should be able to:

- Stay calm when she's hungry and must wait for food.
- Help herself when the serving dishes are passed.
- Say "Yes, please" or "No, thank you."
- Make do with less-favorite foods.
- Talk nicely while she eats.
- Sit at the table until she's finished eating.
- Eat in unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people.

If your child doesn't eat enough

- While it's natural to be concerned when a preschooler eats very little and grows slowly, it's likely your child is satisfied and comfortable with the small amounts he eats. If you try to get him to eat more than he's hungry for, he'll resist and may eat even less.
- Follow the division of responsibility. Schedule meals and snacks and let your preschooler decide how much to eat at those times. Don't give juice or a cookie whenever he comes around because you're so happy to have him eating *something*. You'll fill him up on bits and pieces and in the long run, he'll eat less.
- Be realistic about amounts. A preschooler's helping is about 1/4 to 1/2 the size of an adult's, or one tablespoon per year of age. There might be times when your child doesn't eat anything at all. Don't worry. He'll make up his nutritional needs at another meal or snack, later in the day or the week.
- If you're making special efforts to cook low-fat for your family, the food you serve may be too low in fat for your preschooler. If you think this could be happening, ask a registered dietitian about your child's diet.

If your child eats too much

- Some children eat a lot. It doesn't mean they'll get fat. If your preschooler is growing normally, it's safe to assume that she's eating the right amount for her. If you try to get her to eat less than she's hungry for, you'll frighten her. She'll worry that she won't get enough to eat, and she'll overeat when she gets the chance.
- Follow the division of responsibility for feeding. Offer structured meals and snacks. Let your preschooler eat as much as she wants at those times. Don't allow eating at other times.
- You can't—and shouldn't try to—control the size and shape of body your preschooler develops. Trying to make her thin could end up making her fatter than she might otherwise be. Let her grow in the way that nature intended. (It's normal for toddlers to be chubby; most start to lose that round baby look around the third year.)
- Your preschooler will grow up to eat like you do. If you worry about food, or diet a lot, your child will, too. If you learn to listen to your body to know how much to eat, your child will grow up listening to her body, too.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense by Ellyn Satter. Bull Publishing, 1983, 1986. A warm, supportive book for parents about basic nutrition for infants and young children.

Ellyn Satter's Nutrition and Feeding for Infants and Children: Handout Masters. Ellyn Satter Associates, 1995. A set of 56 reproducible handouts containing information distilled from ***Child of Mine*** and ***How to Get Your Kid to Eat*** to answer questions parents ask most often about growth, feeding, and nutrition. Ideal for distribution to parents in nutrition, health, and education settings.

Feeding with Love and Good Sense by Ellyn Satter. Ellyn Satter Associates, 1989, 1994. A series of four 15-minute live action videos that look at the interpersonal dynamics of feeding children from infancy through age five. Individual segments are The Infant, The Older Baby, The Toddler, The Preschooler. Comes with a comprehensive teacher's guide.

How to Get Your Kid to Eat ... But Not Too Much by Ellyn Satter. Bull Publishing, 1987. Practical advice on building a healthy, positive feeding relationship between parent and child. Includes specific information for every stage from birth to adolescence, as well as special feeding problems: the sick child, eating disorders, poor growth.

The above materials may be ordered from Ellyn Satter Associates, 4226 Mandan Crescent, Madison, WI 53711, (800) 808-7976.

Learning Through Cooking Activities by Amy Houts, Preschool Publications, Inc., 1993. This instructional guide by the editor of the Preschooler in the Kitchen column, shows how cooking is not only fun for young children, but a way of learning math, science, vocabulary, and social skills. This book can be ordered by calling 1-800-726-1708.

For Children

Bread Bread Bread by Ann Morris, photographs by Ken Heyman. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1989. A photographic world tour exploring the many shapes, sizes, textures, and colors of bread and the diversity of people who eat it.

Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989. Bright colors and bold shapes introduce 75 fruits and vegetables from around the world, each labeled with both upper and lower case letters.

Fat, Fat Rose Marie by Lisa Passen. Holt, 1991. In this humorous and thought-provoking story about true friendship and accepting people for what they are, a little girl stands up to the class bully who picks on her overweight friend.

Feast for 10 by Cathryn Falwell. Clarion, 1993. Count to ten — twice — and see how members of a family shop and work together to prepare a meal.

Feeding Yourself by Vicki Cobb, illustrated by Marylin Hafner. Lippincott, 1989. A humorous look at how knives, forks, spoons, and chopsticks were invented and how they are used today.

I Eat Dinner by Margery Facklam, illustrated by Anita Riggio. Little, Brown, 1987. Just the right size for toddler hands, this book contrasts a child's eating style with that of a cow, duck, squirrel, and other animals.

Lunch by Denise Fleming. Holt, 1992. Few words are needed to tell the story of a hungry mouse eating his way through a large—and colorful—lunch of fruits and vegetables.

Mealtime by Maureen Roffey. Four Winds Press, 1988. Simple pictures and questions encourage discussion of food and eating: "What things go on the table?" "What soup do you like best?" Portrays mealtime as a pleasant family affair, with mom, dad, and kids involved in cooking, eating, cleaning up, then taking a walk.

Miss Mabel's Table by Deborah Chandra, illustrated by Max Grover. Harcourt Brace, 1994. Colorful paintings and a cumulative counting rhyme tell how Miss Mabel makes pancakes to serve ten people in her restaurant.

Vegetable Soup by Jeanne Modesitt, illustrated by Robin Spowart. Macmillan, 1988. When two rabbits try to borrow carrots from the neighbors for lunch, they end up with a variety of unfamiliar vegetables they're afraid to try. Remembering how the other animals raved about the strange foods makes the rabbits brave enough to cook vegetable soup.

What We Eat: A First Look at Food by Sara Lynn & Diane James, illustrated by Joe Wright. Thomson Learning, 1992. From the "Play & Discover" science series, a nutrition book for preschoolers, with facts, activities, and recipes (try the "No-Cook Pizza").

What's On My Plate? by Ruth Belov Gross, illustrated by Isadore Seltzer. Macmillan, 1990. Basic information about the origins of common foods, including cereal, popcorn, raisins, catsup, and pickles.

Bibliography compiled by
Paulette Bochnig Sharkey
and Ellyn Satter

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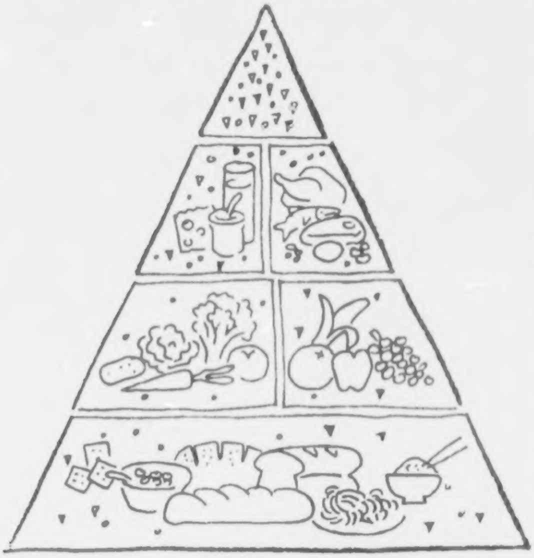
PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

This month's column features an excerpt from Amy Hout's book *Learning Through Cooking Activities*. Preschool Publications, Inc. 1993.



Pyramid Sandwiches: Good Nutrition

Purpose: To learn about good nutrition

What You Need: To follow the pyramid from bottom to top, have foods available from each group, for example:

- whole grain breads
- sliced tomatoes and lettuce
- sliced bananas and apples
- sliced lunch meat or peanut butter
- several types of cheeses
- butter or margarine and mayonnaise

What You Do: At snack time, arrange the foods buffet style, displayed by food groups. Cut bread into triangles to look like pyramids. Let your preschoolers make their own half sandwich by selecting at least one food from each food group.

Discussion: Using a large copy of the above drawing of the Food Guide Pyramid, discuss how people need nutrients from all food groups to be healthy. Display one or more items of each of the food groups on a tray or table. Ask the children to name each food, and point to the food group to which it belongs.

Related Activities:

- Picture Plates: Have your preschoolers cut pictures of foods from a magazine. (For very young preschoolers, cut the pictures yourself.) Help your preschoolers classify the pictures into food groups, using six paper plates, each plate representing a different food group. The children cooperate in gluing the pictures. Label and display in the classroom. (alternate activity) Food Group Pyramid: Glue pictures of food on to a large cardboard triangle to represent the food pyramid.
- Food Riddles: Make up riddles about food to ask your preschoolers. Example: I'm thinking of a vegetable that is orange colored. It looks like a stick. What am I thinking of? (carrot) Use all kinds of food in your riddles.

Books:

- *Alligator Arrived with Apples: A Potluck Alphabet Feast* by Crescent Dragonwagon. Aladdin Books Edition, 1992. A feast that goes from A to Z.
- *Bread and Jam for Frances* by Russell Hoban. Harper Trophy, 1993. Frances decides she likes to eat only bread and jam at every meal — until, to her surprise, her parents grant her wish.

Coming in March:
Encouraging Cooperation
Through Games and Activities

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order
made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues
on request.)
©1995 Preschool
Publications, Inc.
Printed in U.S.A.

Subscription Rates
(U.S., Canada & Mexico)
English Language Edition
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

English/Spanish Language Edition
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
three year........99.00

All other countries add postage
US$12 for 1 year
US$24 for 2 years
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Pp
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de febrero, edición del 1995 (volumne 9, número 12) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Ayuda para que sus hijos coma bien...

Zachary, de dos años, sube ansiosamente a su silla de comer, cruza los brazos y anuncia, "No voy a comer." Su madre responde desesperada, "Pero *tienes que* comer. Toma una cucharada. Mira, aquí viene el avión al hangar. Socorro! Socorro!" En la mesa, Emily, su hermana de cuatro años reclama, "Cuántos bocados de bróculi antes de que me den un bizcochito?" ¿Le suena familiar?

Todos queremos que nuestros hijos sean "buenos para comer." Queremos que las horas de las comidas sean horas felices. Pero a veces no lo son. ¿Qué podemos hacer?. Aquí le damos algunos consejos de Ellyn Satter, autora, conferencista, dietista registrada y terapeuta familiar, especialista en el tratamiento de trastornos de la alimentación.

Tener confianza es la clave

Satter indica que "una relación sana y positiva con los niños a la hora de comer se consigue a través de la confianza: confianza en la habilidad de los niños para comer en una forma que sea positiva para ellos, y también una forma de desarrollar un cuerpo sano. El dar de comer a los niños es un proceso de cooperación, no de subestimar a sus niños."

Cómo comen los niños

Los pre-escolares que son buenos para comer, no se comportan como adultos. Pueden comer mucho un día, y al siguiente, prácticamente nada. Hoy les puede gustar una comida, pero mañana no. Usualmente, los pre-escolares no se comen todo durante una comida—comen una o dos cosas. Son muy sensibles a su hambre y apetito. Hasta pueden dejar la mitad de un plato de helados si están llenos.

¿Quién está a cargo?

La mejor manera de ser madre o padre—incluyendo durante las horas de comida—es entregando amor y estableciendo límites. La regla de oro de Satter para alimentar a los niños es **compartiendo responsabilidades:** Los padres son los responsables de **qué tipo** de comida proveerán, y (para niños mayores de 12 meses) **cuándo y dónde** se servirá. El niño decide **cuánto** comerá y si **lo hará o no**. Veamos cómo funciona:

Las responsabilidades de los padres

- **Usted es la que selecciona los alimentos.**

Usted decide qué comida entra a la casa y se sirve en la mesa. Después de todo, sabe más que el pre-escolar sobre la alimentación. El quiere y tiene que aprender de usted. Ponga cuatro o cinco tipos de alimentos sobre la mesa a la hora de comida: carne u otra fuente de proteínas, leche, una fruta o verdura, o ambas, pan y otro complejo de carbohidrato (patatas, arroz, pasta) y mantequilla o margarina. Deje que el niño escoja entre lo que hay. No limite el menú a alimentos que el pre-escolar aceptará, pero asegúrese de incluir al menos un alimento que le guste. Siempre ofrezca pan porque se lo puede comer si no le gusta el resto.

- **Usted es el que decide los horarios de las comidas.**

Usted decide cuándo servir las comidas y los tentenpiés (refrigerios). El estómago de su niño es pequeño y sus necesidades energéticas son altas. Por esto, necesita tres comidas al día, más los refrigerios, de modo que reciba alimentos cada dos o tres horas. No deje que el pre-escolar coma o beba a otras horas: esto permite que el niño sienta que puede comer lo que desee y a las horas que quiera. Sírvale agua cuando tenga sed. Si come pequeños bocados constántemente - aunque se trate comida y jugos nutritivos, después no tendrá apetito suficiente para ingerir alimentos diferentes a la hora de comer.

- **Usted decide dónde.**

Alimentar al pre-escolar sólo en la mesa, le enseña a tomar en serio la hora de la comida. También evita que usted se acostumbre a darle alimentos cada vez que se lastime, o cuando sus sentimientos estén heridos o esté de mal genio (porque esto le enseña a comer cada vez que se sienta molesto por algo).

- **Depende de usted hacer las comidas ocasiones amistosas.**
  - Tenga cenas en familia. El pre-escolar necesita comer con usted aunque haya más tranquilidad cuando él no esté en la mesa.
  - Haga placentera la hora de la comida: No regañe ni discuta en la mesa.
  - Deje que el niño coma a su manera—dentro de lo razonable. Cuando "se pone a jugar" con la comida lo hace para ver su reacción. Permítale abandonar la mesa.
  - Cambie la comida de modo que le llame la atención. (por ejemplo: prepare alimentos frescos, corte la carne en trozos pequeños).
  - Ayude a que el niño o niña se fije en lo que come. Para comer bien, su niño debe estar tranquilo, relajado y con apetito. Apague el televisor—la televisión lo distrae e interfiere con las horas que la familia tiene para conversar.

Las responsabilidades de los niños

Para que el compartir responsabilidades tenga éxito, su niño también debe poner de su parte. El o ella decidirá:

- Cuánto comerá.
- Si comerá o no.

Los niños saben cuánto tienen que comer. Cada niño crece de manera diferente, y cada niño necesita una cantidad determinada de alimentos. Algunos días el niño tiene hambre, otros, no. Algunos días está activo, y otros no. Si permite que el niño siga su instinto cuando tiene hambre, apetito, o cuando se siente satisfecho, puede estar seguro que comerá lo suficiente para crecer normalmente. Si usted insiste en que coma, el niño no comerá bien.

El cuerpo de su niño

Algunos niños son altos y delgados por naturaleza, otros, son más macizos y musculares y también hay algunos con tendencia a la gordura. El cuerpo de su hijo o hija está determinado principalmente por el factor hereditario.

No compare el crecimiento de su hijo con el de otros niños. Si se atiene a las estadísticas de las tablas de crecimiento, verá que se está desarrollando normalmente. Sus niños no debieran salirse de estos parámetros. Si esto ocurre, consulte a su doctor—algo está afectando su crecimiento.

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Apoyo sin imposición

Los niños se desarrollan mejor cuando pueden hacer decisiones a la hora de comer. Al imponer la fuerza: Los niños comen menos. Permita que su pre-escolar deje la comida que no quiere. Dígale que si prueba un alimento no tiene la obligación de comérselo si no le gusta. Deje que decida el momento en que tiene hambre o cuando está satisfecho. Si confía en que su niño va a comer, esto le permitirá disfrutar el momento de la comida. Si deja de preocuparse de que coma, usted puede disfrutar viendo cómo aprende a comer, cómo crece y al mismo tiempo hacer un buen papel como padre o madre.

Cómo alimentar al niño pequeño

Un niño pequeño necesita manejar su propio mundo. También necesita tener límites para poder manejar su mundo. Al comer, usted elije alimentos que sean sanos y nutritivos, y elije las horas para comer. Luego, deje que los niños decidan cuánto quieren comer aunque sea sólo un poco.

• **Instelos a degustar alimentos nuevos**

A los niños pequeños no le gustan las comidas nuevas, pero pueden aprender a tomarles el gusto si hay tiempo y existe la posibilidad de probarlas. Deje que su niño pequeño vea los alimentos nuevos sobre la mesa; que lo vea comerlos. Si no lo presiona, a la larga los probará. La sacará de la boca, pero no se desespere. No está rechazando el alimento, sólo se está acostumbrando. Lo hará muchas veces hasta que le guste lo suficiente como para tragarlo—y comerlo.

• **Escoja los momentos de ponerse firme**

Usted puede obligar a que el niño pequeño se siente a la mesa, pero no puede forzarlo a comer. No ruegue, soborne ("Come tu bróculi y podrás comer postre), amenace, o juegue ("Aquí viene el tren.") Demuéstrele que no lo obligará a comer, y lo más probable es que decida comer. Pero tiene que ser claro—él se dará cuenta si usted trata de engañarlo.

• **No deje que se acostumbre a comer continuamente**

Sus niños pueden acostumbrarse a comer lo mismo y continuamente. Cuando se planifican las comidas de antemano, se simplifica este problema. Si le pregunta a su niño qué quiere comer, siempre pedirá su alimento preferido. No le pregunte. Deje que escoja de lo que hay sobre la mesa igual como lo hace el resto de la familia.

• **No haga comidas rápidas y sencillas**

Cuando su niño dice que no le gusta la comida, ignórelo, o dígale "Ah, bueno." No vaya a preparar otra cosa rápida (que le dé al niño control sobre la comida). Ponga un vaso de leche y pan en el lugar donde se sienta. Ayúdelo a que el mismo se sirva su plato. Y déjelo que coma—o que no lo haga.

Cómo darle de comer a los niños entre tres y cinco años

Los niños entre tres y cinco años quieren que la comida los haga crecer y que esto tenga la misma importancia que otras actividades, como aprender a andar en bicicleta y a escribir. Los niños prestan atención a lo que usted hace. Cuando ven que usted come frejoles, piensan que algún día comerán lo mismo.

• **No obligue a su hijo/a a comer**

Seguramente ahora la niña no tendrá tanto miedo a probar nuevos alimentos. Ya no pensará que cuando tiene un sabor diferente, es malo. Aún así, no la obligue a comer, ni la convenza de manera amable ("Vamos, sólo un bocado"). A los niños les gusta menos la comida cuando se les da una recompensa por ingerirla. Quizás piensen, "Si mis padres me tienen que dar algo para que me coma esto, no debe ser muy bueno." Recálqueles que no tienen que comer lo que no quieren. Puede decirle, "Cuando crezcas, probablemente esto te gustará." Podrá decirle que probando varias veces le ayudará a tomarle el gusto. Pero no insista. Créale a su niño cada vez que le diga que no quiere comer algo.

• **Resígnese a perder algo de comida**

La cantidad de alimentos que se desperdicia aumenta cuando hay un niño en la casa. No calculará muy bien cuánto comerá. Pondrá la comida en su plato y comerá sólo un poco o quizás nada. Recuérdele de manera suave, que no se sirva tanto, pero no lo obligue a comérselo todo.

• **Respete sus peculiaridades.**

Si a su niño le gustan los emparedados cortados en forma de triángulo puede que no se los coma si están en forma de cuadrados. No piense que está tratando de molestar- este comportamiento es típico de los niños entre tres y cinco años. Si respeta sus preferencias no significa que el niño se convertirá en un consentido.

Enséñele a cómo comportarse en la mesa

Si permite que el niño se comporte mal durante las comidas, no aprenderá a comer con los demás. Los niños entre tres y cinco años de edad podrán:

- Quedarse tranquilos cuando tienen hambre y esperar la comida.
- Servirse sólo cuando le pasan los platos de comida.
- Decir, "Sí, por favor," o "No, gracias."
- Conformarse aunque los platos no sean sus favoritos.
- Hablar educadamente en la mesa a la hora de comer.
- Permanecer en la mesa hasta que termine de comer.
- Comer en lugares diferentes con personas que no les sean muy familiares.

Si el niño no come lo suficiente

- Si bien es normal preocuparse cuando el pre-escolar come poco y tiene un crecimiento lento, es posible que esté satisfecho con las pequeñas cantidades que come. Si trata de hacer que coma más de lo que puede, pondrá resistencia y quizás coma menos.
- Comparta responsabilidades. Planifique horarios para las comidas y los tentenpiés y deje que el pre-escolar decida la cantidad de comida que desea comer a esas horas. No le dé jugo ni bizcochitos cada vez que se le acerque sólo por el hecho de que usted se alegre de que coma. De esta forma estará satisfecha y después comerá menos.
- Sea realista sobre a las cantidades. La cantidad de comida para un niño es entre un cuarto y la mitad de lo que come un adulto, o una cucharada por cada año de edad. Habrá ocasiones en que su hija no coma. No se preocupe. Satisfará sus necesidades alimenticias con otra comida o tentenpié más tarde en el día.
- Si se esfuerza por cocinar alimentos bajos en grasa, la comida que le sirva puede tener niveles nutritivos muy bajos para su pre-escolar. Si piensa que esto sucede con usted, consulte con un nutricionista sobre la dieta de su niño.

Si el niño come demasiado

- Algunos niños comen mucho. No significa que se pondrán gordos. Si el pre-escolar crece normalmente, quiere decir que está comiendo la cantidad apropiada. Si trata de que coma menos, lo asustará. Se preocupará de que no puede comer lo suficiente, y comerá de más cuando tenga la oportunidad.
- Comparta la responsabilidad a la hora de alimentarse. Ofrézcale comidas determinadas y refrigerios. Deje que el pre-escolar coma la cantidad que desee. No permita que coma a otras horas.
- Usted no puede—y no debe—tratar de controlar el desarrollo del cuerpo de su niña. Si trata de que sea delgada podría convertirla en una persona más gorda de la que debe ser. Deje que crezca de manera normal. (Es normal que los niños pequeños sean rellenitos; la mayoría comienza a cambiar esa apariencia cuando cumplen los tres años.)
- Cuando crezca, su pre-escolar tendrá sus mismos hábitos alimenticios. Si usted se preocupa de la comida y hace dietas, su niña hará lo mismo. Si usted aprende a determinar la cantidad de comida que necesita su cuerpo, su hija también aprenderá a hacer lo mismo.

(Este artículo esboza ideas del libro de Ellyn Satter, *How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much,* y otros materiales (ver la página de Library Resources) y fue preparado por Paulette Bochnig Sharkey, editora de desarrollo de Ellyn Satter Associates)

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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 1 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* **March 1995**

Encouraging cooperation through games and activities . . .

The children slowly circle the chairs, listening for the music to stop. When it does they scramble frantically, grabbing and pushing as they compete for a seat, because there is one less chair than there are children! One child, who wasn't quick enough, must leave the game and sit on the sidelines watching as the next round begins. As the game continues, more chairs and more children are removed to the sidelines.

This is the traditional version of Musical Chairs. When one chair and one child remain, the game is over. There is one winner — and many losers. And unless you were the most athletic among your peers, you probably recall very well how it felt to be one of the losers — whether in an elimination activity, at the end of an organized game, or when chosen last for a team. It felt terrible!

Consider instead the following scenario. *The children slowly circle the chairs, listening for the music to stop. When it does they scramble, giggling, trying to find a way for everyone to fit on the available chairs. With each round, the goal of getting everyone onto the diminishing number of chairs becomes even more challenging. By the end of the game, the children have erupted into uncontrollable laughter as they all try to crowd onto the one remaining chair.*

This is *Cooperative* Musical Chairs, in which everyone wins — in more ways than one. When children are given opportunities to work together toward a solution or common goal, they know they each contribute to the success of the venture. Every child plays a vital role in the outcome, and each accepts the responsibility involved in fulfilling that role. The children also learn to solve problems in creative and productive ways, to become tolerant of others' ideas, and to accept the similarities and differences of other children. Furthermore, cooperative activities are far less likely to cause the feelings of inferiority that so often result from the comparisons made during competitive situations.

Of course, we've all heard the expressions "It's a dog-eat-dog world" and "It's a jungle out there." The assumption, for years, has been that pitting children against one another is necessary preparation for surviving in such a world. But a little bit of losing goes a long way. And certainly a more important skill is the ability to get along — to live and work — with one another.

continued >>>>>

In This Issue: Suggestions for Parents...2,3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...3; Library Resources...4

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For preschoolers, it is unconditional acceptance and an early sense of security that later help them to deal with rejection and face problems head-on. When given a choice, preschoolers will opt for cooperative activities rather than competitive ones. Not only do they find cooperative activities more enjoyable, but research tells us that the motivation to compete is *learned* — and young children simply haven't had time to be indoctrinated into society's competitive ways. Here's what else the research shows.

Competition:

- Is not developmentally appropriate for young children and hurries them into adulthood.
- Causes people to believe they aren't responsible for what happens to them and contributes to the concept of learned helplessness.
- Is detrimental to self-esteem.
- Results in less spontaneity and creativity.
- Significantly increases aggression.
- Invites the use of cheating and other antisocial behaviors in order to win.

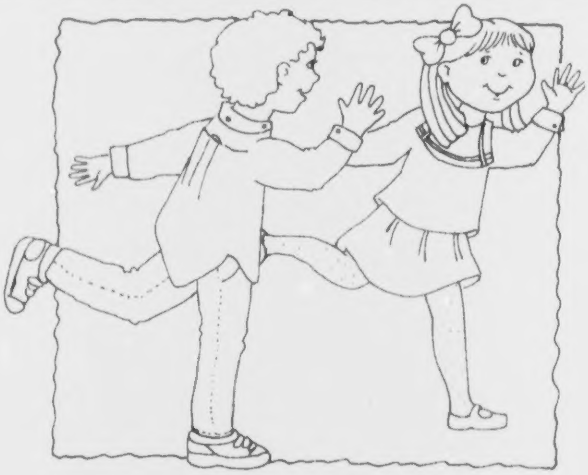
Cooperation:

- Gets things done at work and at school more effectively than competition.
- Is more conducive to psychological health.
- Leads to friendlier feelings among participants.
- Promotes a feeling of being in control of one's life.
- Increases self-esteem.
- Results in greater sensitivity and trust toward others.
- Develops patience with peers.
- Enhances feelings of belonging.
- Increases motivation.
- Promotes prosocial behaviors.

The research also shows that America is the most competitive nation in the world. Competition, therefore, is so prevalent in the classroom and on the playing field that parents who try to teach their children to work *with* rather than *against* others will find it's not an easy task. But the evidence can be seen in the research results above: whatever amount of effort it takes, teaching children to cooperate is worth it!

Rae Pica is a movement education specialist who speaks and presents workshops throughout the country and promotes cooperation through movement and music activities. She is the author of the *Moving & Learning Series*, published by Human Kinetics (800/747-4457), and *Experiences in Movement*, published by Delmar, 1995 (800/998-7498).

The experts agree that a child's performance should never be compared with that of someone else's, whether it be a sibling's, a classmate's, a neighbor's, or a parent's. And winning as the only acceptable outcome *must* be de-emphasized. Affection and approval should be granted to children *unconditionally*. If we want to help our children improve certain skills, it is far more effective — and confidence-building — to provide specific feedback, stressing self-comparison. For example, a child learning to perform a forward roll might be told "You tucked your head to your chest much better this time." A child involved in a game situation should hear all the things she or he did well, regardless of who won or lost.



Suggestions for parents

To foster prosocial behavior parents can choose play materials intended for two or more children (like teeter-totters and board games). Research with preschoolers has shown that such materials foster greater prosocial play behavior than do toys designed for use by a single child. But it is in organized game playing that children are most often confronted with competition. Too often, they are expected to play games that have rules that are intended for adults and are therefore developmentally inappropriate. Parents should ensure that the game fits the child, rather than the other way around.

When given a choice, preschoolers prefer cooperative activities to competitive ones. And, again, studies have shown that cooperative games actually increase the cooperative social interaction among young children. Following are several cooperative activities. Suggest them the next time you host a children's party or any time two or more children get together — or you and your preschooler can do the partner activities yourselves!

Mirror Game Participants pair off and stand facing each other. One partner performs a series of simple movements (standing in place), which the second partner mirrors. After a while, the partners reverse roles. The object is not to try to trick each other but to resemble a mirror reflection as closely as possible!

Shadow Game This is similar to the previous activity, but in this game one partner stands with his or her back to the second partner and performs various movements that the latter "shadows." These movements can be performed in place or can move throughout the room. Again, the partners eventually reverse roles so both have a chance to lead.

Footsie Rolls Participants pair off and lie on their backs with the soles of their feet together. The object in this activity is for partners to roll over without their feet breaking contact. This one takes a lot of cooperation and enough room to move safely and is loads of fun!

Touch and Move This activity requires partners to connect various body parts, which you assign, and to discover how many ways they can move while remaining connected. You can ask the children to connect one or both hands, elbows, knees, or feet. Backs, bottoms, and tops of heads are also possibilities!

Musical Hoops This game is another alternative to Musical Chairs. When the music starts, the players walk all around the hula hoops that have been scattered about the room. When the music stops, they are to step inside the hoop closest to them. In one version of the game, you suggest a different motor skill (jumping, hopping, galloping, etc.) each time the music starts. In another, as in Cooperative Musical Chairs, a hoop is removed with each round and the children must share the remaining ones, even when there is just one hoop left! (One solution is for players to each place a foot inside the hoop.)

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Bean Bag Freeze Each player moves throughout the room with a bean bag on her or his head. If the bean bag falls off, that player must remain frozen in place until another player returns the fallen bean bag to the frozen player's head — without losing his or her own!

Group Balance The players form a circle and place their hands on the shoulders of the players beside them. You then issue challenges for the children: 1)to stand on one foot only, 2)rise onto tiptoe (on both feet), 3)rise onto tiptoe with knees bent, 4)stand on one foot with free foot extended into center of circle, 5)rise onto tiptoe and bend forward at the waist, etc. The object of the activity is to maintain a steady balance throughout all of the challenges! (You might even suggest that the children count aloud the number of seconds they're able to remain steady.)

Let's Slither Players begin by pairing off and stretching out on their stomachs, one in front of the other. The player in back takes hold of the ankles of the player in front, forming a two-person "snake" that starts to slither across the floor. This two-person snake then connects with another two-person snake, and the process continues until the entire group has formed one big snake!

Rae Pica

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Favorites

Our daughter, Sarah, often asks, "What is your favorite...?" The question can end with any number of items: food, color, dress, friend, etc. Children have favorites. A favorite food is one you could eat over and over and not get tired of it. One of mine was spaghetti with a sweet, spicy tomato sauce. My mother made the best spaghetti, which we sprinkled with parmesan cheese. How hard I tried to twirl mine around a fork to eat it delicately. How filling and satisfied I felt about what I ate. Let's hope your child will choose healthy favorites. By healthy I mean, not too much fat or sugar, containing foods from the lower end of the food pyramid (see P&p 2/95), such as complex carbohydrates.

Some typical favorites are healthy. Spaghetti, for example, is part of the bread and cereal group. This group is lowest on the food pyramid, to illustrate that is the group to eat the most. Spaghetti is 'pasta.' Pasta, which means 'paste in a processed form,' is the label we use for any shape of spaghetti, noodle, ravioli, etc. made from this dough. You can buy whole wheat flour pasta or green pasta (made with spinach) to increase the nutritional value. The tomatoes, onions and peppers in spaghetti sauce have vitamin C and fiber. But kids don't think about that. They think about the delicious taste and texture, the way the pasta feels on their teeth when it is cooked al dente, 'to the bite.' Below are recipes for some children's favorites in our family. Pass them family style and let your preschooler take what she wants. What are the favorites in your family?
When my nephew was 2 years old we bought him a white tee-shirt printed with squiggles of spaghetti and botches of red sauce above the caption, 'My pasghetti eating shirt.' Yes it is messy! One of the nice things about spaghetti is you can adjust the recipe to suit tastes and/or what you have on hand. If you want a vegetarian sauce, leave out the beef, and add more vegetables, such as mushroom, eggplant, and artichoke hearts. If you don't have or don't like green peppers, leave them out. If you love mushrooms, add them at the beginning, with the garlic.

Italian Spaghetti Sauce

1 onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
1 pound ground beef
3 cloves garlic, minced
16-oz can tomatoes (chop, if desired) with juice
1 tablespoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon basil
32-oz. tomato sauce
6-oz. tomato paste
1 tablespoon sugar (optional)
1-lb. package spaghetti

Show preschoolers spaghetti and other ingredients before cooking. Taste green pepper, if desired. In a large skillet, fry onion, green pepper, and ground beef over medium heat until pink is gone from beef. Add garlic and cook 2 minutes more. Drain grease. Add tomatoes. Preschooler can help add spices: oregano and basil. Then add tomato sauce, tomato paste, and sugar. Bring to a boil, turn down heat to low, and simmer uncovered for 1 hour. Meanwhile, cook spaghetti. Preschoolers can help measure water about half full into a 4 qt. pot. Add a dash of salt. Bring water to boiling over high heat. Add spaghetti, turn down heat to medium and cook for about 10 minutes, or according to package directions. Drain in a colander and place in a serving bowl or back in the pot. Cover to keep warm. Have preschoolers compare uncooked and cooked spaghetti.

To serve: mix about a cup of sauce in with spaghetti. Serve spaghetti on plates and ladle extra sauce on top. Pass the parmesan cheese at the table. Preschoolers might need their spaghetti cut up in order to eat it, rather than twirling it around their forks.
Yield: 4-6 servings.

The advantages of pasta salads are they are easy to make, can be made ahead of time, and are delicious to nibble on, even when appetites are low. One of our favorites is this macaroni salad.

Tuna Macaroni Salad

1/2 cup low-fat mayonnaise or salad dressing
2 cups macaroni
1 can (6 1/2 oz.) tuna, packed in water, drained
2 stalks celery, sliced
1/2 green pepper, chopped

Show your preschooler the uncooked macaroni. Cook macaroni according to package directions. Drain and cool. Meanwhile, let your preschooler help mix mayonnaise or salad dressing, celery, and green pepper. Toss with tuna and macaroni. Chill. Serves 4-6.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Experiences in Movement, by Rae Pica. Delmar, 1995. This new text, by the author of the featured articles in this issue, explores the role of movement in the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Moments of Peace... Moments of Fun, by Lynnrae Francis. Francis Family Publishing, (3901 Dartmouth Dr., Minnetonka, MN 55345) 1994. A little book that is chock full of creative, non-competitive, age-appropriate activities for young children.

No Contest: The Case Against Competition, by Alfie Kohn. Houghton Mifflin, 1992. This book is described as the first comprehensive book to show why competition is often damaging. It refutes the myths that competition builds character and is an instinctive part of human nature. This book is must reading for every parent!

Cooperative Learning in Early Childhood, by Harvey C. Foyle Lawrence Lyman, & Sandra Alexander Thies. National Education Association, 1991. This slim publication provides a rationale and many activities for cooperative learning among young children. Although intended for early childhood professionals, this book can help parents understand the need for cooperative learning situations and also help them choose the appropriate preschool setting for their children.

The Cooperative Sports & Games Book: Challenge Without Competition, by Terry Orlick. Pantheon, 1978. This book was the first of its kind and is still the most well-known collection of cooperative activities. Written by a sports psychologist who has conducted considerable research on cooperation and competition, the book contains over 100 cooperative games.

The Second Cooperative Sports & Games Book, by Terry Orlick. Pantheon, 1982. This volume consists of 200-plus additional games for players of all ages, including toddlers. The activities emphasize imagination as well as cooperative skills.

Everybody Wins: 393 Non-competitive Games for Young Children, by Jeffrey Sobel. Walker & Co., 1984. The games in this book are designed for children 3 to 10 and are intended to promote feelings of self-worth and confidence — as opposed to rejection — in children.

Movement Activities for Early Childhood, by Carol Totsky Hammett. Human Kinetics, 1992. This collection of 100-plus child-tested movement activities makes learning new skills fun for Preschoolers.

For Children: Books About Cooperative Behavior

The Little Red Hen, by Byron Barton. HarperCollins, 1993. With bright, childlike illustrations, the author/illustrator tells the classic story of the little red hen who asks her friends for help with planting, threshing, and grinding the wheat. "Not I," says each of them. Then it is time to eat the bread she has baked. And her friends reap the consequences of their non-cooperative behavior.

Zinnia and Dot, by Lisa Campbell Ernst. Viking, 1992. Zinnia and Dot are two boastful hens who are always fighting about whose eggs are lovelier. When a weasel steals all but one of their eggs, they fight over the ownership of the remaining egg. But the weasel returns to claim the last egg, and the two hens, cooperating at last, drive him away.

Mushroom in the Rain, adapted from the Russian of V. Suteyev, by Mirra Ginsburg. Macmillan, 1987. When an ant gets caught in the rain, he hides under a mushroom. A wet butterfly joins him, although there is hardly room for one under the mushroom. Soon they make room for a mouse, a sparrow, and a rabbit. How could they all fit? Can you guess what happens to a mushroom when it rains?

Two Greedy Bears, Adapted from a Hungarian Folk Tale, by Mirra Ginsburg. Aladdin Books edition, 1990. Two bear cubs go out to see the world. But they are always trying to compete with each other: when one is hungry, the other is hungrier; when one has a stomach ache, the other has a bigger one. They see a cheese lying in the road. Because they are so competitive, they are outwitted by a sly fox, who uses their greedy natures to get to eat the cheese himself.

Rosie and the Poor Rabbits, by Maryann Macdonald. Atheneum, 1994. Rosie, the little girl rabbit, learns from her mother that some children don't have nice clothing and toys. Her mother suggests that Rosie might give some of her things to a poor family. The little girl rabbit struggles a bit with her feelings but finally she makes positive decisions about parting with some of her clothing and toys.

The Car Washing Street, by Denise Lewis Patrick. Tambourine Books, 1993. Every Saturday morning, all the neighbors on Matthew's block wash their cars. One hot summer day, this neighborhood ritual turns into a way for all the people on the block to have some fun and cool off too!

Preschoolers Moving & Learning, by Rae Pica, with music by Richard Gardzina. Human Kinetics, 1990. This is a complete movement program featuring 200 movement activities (some of which are described under "Suggestions for Parents") and 5 audiocassettes of original music, all in a three-ring binder.

Who Can Boo the Loudest? by Harriet Ziefert. Harper & Row, 1990. A big ghost and a little ghost meet in the moonlight and try to discover who can boo the loudest. But they find in the end that cooperation works best.

Family Pastimes. This is a small family business that manufactures about 50 indoor games for adults and children, including cooperative versions of chess, backgammon, Scrabble, and Monopoly. Address is RR4, Perth, Ont., Canada K7H 3C6.

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and Betty Farber

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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Printed in U.S.A.

Subscription Rates
(U.S., Canada & Mexico)
English Language Edition
one year...US$28.00
two year.........52.00
three year.......75.00

English/Spanish Language Edition
one year...US$38.00
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All other countries add postage
US$12 for 1 year
US$24 for 2 years
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A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de marzo, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 1) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Estimulando la cooperación con juegos y actividades...

Los niños ponen sus sillas lentamente en círculo y escuchan la música hasta que ésta para. Cuando se detiene, los niños se abren paso frenéticamente tomándose y empujándose compitiendo por una de las sillas, ya que hay una silla menos que el número total de niños jugando. El niño que no fue lo suficientemente rápido tiene que retirarse del juego y sentarse a un lado, esperando y mirando hasta que comience la siguiente vuelta. A medida que el juego continúa se retiran más sillas y más niños quedan aparte.

Esta es la versión tradicional de la "Sillas Musicales." Cuando queda sólo una silla y un niño, el juego se termina. Hay un ganador y muchos perdedores. A menos que usted haya sido el más rápido entre su compañeros, seguramente Ud. se acordará muy bien de como se sentía siendo uno de los perdedores. Ya bien se tratara de una actividad por eliminación, o en la final de un juego organizado, o cuando se nos escogía en último lugar para formar parte de un equipo, perder era una sensación terrible.

En cambio, considere el siguiente escenario
...Lentamente, los niños ponen sus sillas en círculo y escuchan la música hasta que ésta para. Cuando se detiene, se abren paso riéndose y tratando de sentarse sobre las sillas que están disponibles. Cada ronda se convierte en un desafío mayor cuando los niños tratan de sentarse y hay cada vez menos sillas. Al final del juego, los niños se ríen incontrolablemente mientras tratan todos de amontonarse sobre la única silla que va quedando.

Esto es la "Silla Musical Cooperativa," en la que todos los niños ganan de más de una manera. Cuando a los niños se les da la oportunidad de trabajar juntos para lograr una solución a un problema, o lograr una meta común, ellos saben que están contribuyendo al éxito de esta empresa. Cada niño juega un papel vital para conseguir el resultado, y todos aceptan la responsabilidad que implica cumplir con su rol. Los niños también aprenden a resolver problemas en forma productiva y creativa, a tolerar las ideas de los demás, y a aceptar las similitudes y diferencias que tienen con otros niños. Más aún, en las actividades en conjunto hay menos probabilidad de que los niños sientan sentimientos de inferioridad, los que tan frecuentemente son producto de comparaciones que se hacen en situaciones competitivas.

Por supuesto que todos hemos escuchado las expresiones, "El que pestañea pierde," y "La vida es como una selva." Durante años se pensó que era necesario que los niños se enfrentaran para prepararlos para sobrevivir en tal mundo cruel. Una pequeña dosis de derrota no puede hacerles mal! Pero ciertamente hay habilidades más importantes, tal como ser tolerantes con los demás, vivir y trabajar juntos.

Para los preescolares, la aceptación incondicional y un sentido de seguridad a temprana edad, le ayudarán después a poder enfrentar los problemas "de frente" y también a enfrentar el rechazo. Cuando se les da la opción, los niños optarán por actividades cooperativas en vez de competitivas. No sólo disfrutan más las actividades cooperativas, sino además, los estudios señalan que lo que motiva la competencia es una conducta aprendida, y los niños aún no han tenido el tiempo suficiente como para adoctrinarse con las ideas de competencia que existen en la sociedad. Las investigaciones también han demostrado lo siguiente.

Competencia:
- Desde el punto de vista del desarrollo, la competencia no es apropiada para los niños ya que los apresura a alcanzar la adultez antes de tiempo.
- Hace que las personas crean que no son responsables por lo que les pasa y contribuye al concepto de "inhabilidad aprendida."
- Es perjudicial a la auto-estima.
- Resulta en menos espontaneidad y menos creatividad.
- Aumenta considerablemente la agresión.
- Incentiva el uso de trampas y de otros tipos de conductas antisociales como métodos para ganar.

Cooperación:
- Permite que las cosas en el trabajo y en la escuela se hagan de manera más efectiva que usando la competencia.
- Contribuye a la salud sicológica.
- Genera sentimientos mayores de amistad entre los participantes.
- Promueve la sensación de estar en control da la propia vida.
- Aumenta la auto-estima.
- Resulta en mayor sensibilidad y en mayor confianza con los demás.
- Desarrolla la paciencia del niño con otros niños de su misma edad.
- Realza el sentido de pertenencia.
- Aumenta la motivación.
- Promueve conductas sociales.

Los estudios también demuestran que los Estados Unidos es el país más competitivo del mundo. Por

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ello, la competencia es tan fuerte en el salón de clases como en el patio de juegos, y los padres que tratan de enseñar a sus hijos a que trabajen en conjunto, encontrarán difícil su tarea.

Los resultados citados anteriormente indican que cualquier esfuerzo que se haga para enseñar a que sus hijos sean más cooperativos, valen la pena!

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Sugerencias para los padres

Los expertos concuerdan en que la conducta de un niño nunca debe compararse con la de otro niño, aunque sea su hermano, un compañero de clases, un vecino, o uno de sus padres. Tampoco debe enfatizarse que ganar es el único resultado aceptable. El niño debe recibir afecto y aprobación en forma incondicional. Si queremos ayudar a que nuestros niños mejoren determinadas habilidades, es mucho más efectivo, y contribuye más a aumentar la confianza en sí mismos, el estimularlos y retroalimentarlos para que hagan comparaciones con ellos mismos.

Por ejemplo, a un niño que está aprendiendo un determinado rol se le puede decir, "Pusiste la cabeza en el pecho mucho mejor esta vez." Niños involucrado en situaciones de juego debieran escuchar todas las cosas que él o ella hicieron bien, sin importar quien ganó o perdió.

Para fomentar los comportamientos más sociables, los padres pueden escoger materiales de juego diseñados para dos o más niños (como son los balancines y juegos de tablero). Los estudios con preescolares han demostrado que tales materiales fomentan en mayor grado las conductas de juegos más sociables, que aquellos juegos diseñados para el uso de un solo niño. Pero es en los juegos organizados que los niños se enfrentan más a la competencia. Muy a menudo, se espera que jueguen con reglas hechas para adultos y que son inapropiadas para su nivel de desarrollo. Los padres debieran asegurarse de que el juego sea apto para sus niños, y no al revés.

Cuando a un preescolar se le da a elegir, prefieren las actividades cooperativas sobre las competitivas. Y una vez más, los estudios han demostrado que los juegos cooperativos aumentan la interacción social cooperativa entre los niños. A continuación hay una serie de actividades cooperativas. Sugiéralas la próxima vez que sea el anfitrión en la fiesta de su niño o cuando se junten dos o más niños. Usted y su preescolar pueden hacer las actividades de parejas entre ustedes mismos.

El Juego del Espejo. Los participantes se forman en parejas y se paran frente a frente. Un niño lleva a cabo una serie de movimientos simples (parándose en un mismo sitio) que el otro participante tiene que imitar. Después de un rato, se cambian los roles. El objeto no es que uno engañe al otro sino que sus movimientos se asemejen lo más posible al reflejo de un espejo.

El Juego de la Sombra. Este juego es similar al anterior, pero en este uno de los niños se para de espaldas al otro y realiza varios movimientos, que el otro imita como si fuera su sombra. Los movimientos pueden hacerse parado en un sólo lugar o moviéndose por toda la habitación. Después se cambian los roles.

Pies Que Dan Vuelta. Los participantes se agrupan en parejas, se acuestan de espalda con las plantas de los pies pegadas con las del otro niño. El objeto en esta actividad es que las parejas se den vueltas sobre el piso sin que se les despeguen las plantas de los pies. Este juego requiere de mucha cooperación y de espacio suficiente en la habitación, y es muy divertido!

Tocarse y Moverse. Esta actividad trata de que los participantes pongan en contacto varias partes del cuerpo que ellos eligen, descubriendo cuantas maneras de moverse hay mientras se mantienen conectados. Usted puede decirle a los niños que se conecten por las manos, por los codos, por las rodillas o por los pies. La espalda, el trasero y la parte de arriba de la cabeza, también son posibilidades!

Anillos ("Hula Hoops") Musicales. Este juego es una alternativa a las Sillas Musicales. Cuando comienza la música, los participantes caminan alrededor de los anillos que han sido puestos por toda la sala. Cuando la música se detiene, los niños tienen que pararse dentro del anillo que esté más cerca. En una versión del juego, usted puede sugerir diferentes actividades cada vez que comience la música (saltar, brincar, galopar, etc.,). En otra versión, al igual que en la Sillas Musicales Cooperativa, en cada turno se retira uno de los anillos y los niños tienen que compartir los restantes aunque quede sólo uno! (Una solución es que las participantes pongan sólo un pie dentro del anillo.)

Juego del Saquito en la Cabeza. Cada participante se mueve por la habitación con un saquito sobre la cabeza. Si éste se le cae, el jugador debe quedarse quieto en su lugar hasta que otro participante le ponga denuevo el saco sobre la cabeza — sin perder el suyo propio!

Equilibrio en Grupo. Los participantes forman un círculo y ponen sus manos sobre los hombros de sus compañeros a cada lado. Luego usted les asigna desafíos: 1) Que se paren solamente sobre un pie, 2) que se paren sobre las puntas de los pies (en ambos pies), 3) pararse sobre las puntas de los pies pero con las rodillas dobladas, 4) pararse en un pie mientras el otro pie se mantiene extendido hacía la mitad del círculo, 5) levantarse en la punta de los pies y fleccionar la cintura, etc. Esta actividad tiene como objeto mantener un buen equilibrio durante cada una de las actividades! (Incluso puede decirle a los niños que cuenten en voz alta el número de segundos que logren mantenerse en equilibrio.)

Deslicémonos. Los participantes se agrupan en parejas y se acuestan sobre el estómago uno detrás del otro. El niño de atrás se agarra de los tobillos del que está adelante y forman una serpiente de dos personas que comienza a deslizarse por el piso. Esta serpiente de dos personas luego se conecta con otra y así continúa el proceso hasta qué el grupo haya formado una larga serpiente!

por Rae Pica

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Pp Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 2 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* **April 1995**

Helping preschoolers achieve autonomy and a sense of competence . . .

Mikey is crying in his crib. He has just awakened from his nap and he's ready to leave the confines of his bed. As Mikey's father comes into the room Mikey grins broadly and reaches out his little arms. "Me out," he calls. His father grins back, "Hi little guy, had enough nap time?" He picks Mikey up, "Come on then, let's roll."

We often think that a toddler exhibits autonomy when he is determined to walk across the floor by himself, or when the preschooler rejects adult help to make the letter *B*. But autonomy is something which begins in infancy from the experiences caregivers provide from the earliest moments of a baby's life. And it is shown in small ways: a mother sensing that her baby doesn't want to play peek-a-boo right now; a baby toddling across the floor secure in the knowledge that his mother standing near will be there if he needs her; little Mikey calling out, knowing someone will 'rescue' him from his crib.

Basic trust

Autonomy begins with the development of a sense of basic trust; a baby's belief that she can rely on her caregivers. We create a sense of trust when we provide sensitive care of our baby's needs, when our baby knows that we will be there. With this certain knowledge that if they need help, help will be there, toddlers begin to reach out and explore.

We foster autonomy and competence when we encourage children to take on and succeed in new skills. These capabilities grow when children realize they can communicate their needs to us, and we will listen. We foster autonomy by being a resource for children, helping them to discover the solutions to their problems calmly and gently without overwhelming them with *our* solutions.

Developing a sense of initiative

Children develop a sense of initiative by exploring and manipulating objects. When they are little it may be seen in activities as simple as piling up blocks, placing stickers on a page, or writing a story in scribbles. As they get older they will start to develop little projects on their own: making a birthday card, setting up a party for their dolls, pretending to dress up as adults and go to the store, making incredible machines. This kind of play helps them develop a sense of autonomy and competence — *an "I can do it" attitude*. If you listen you can hear them actually put this into words — "Look at the machine I made!" "Don't you think my birthday card is nice?" They'll do this with physical activity also. "Look at me swing, I can swing so high!" "I can run so fast, faster than you." You should validate and encourage their independence and achievements. "That's a great machine. Look how well you put the parts together." "What a lovely card. Aunt Jean will love it." "You sure are a fast runner!"

Sometimes this exploration and experimentation doesn't match what adults would like to see happen. Many a baby has exasperated his parents by tossing food over the side of the high chair and watching with delight as it splatters on the floor. Other babies watch food squish through their fingers. Troublesome children? No — children learning about gravity, about cause and effect, about the way things operate, and their ability to cause things to happen.

The importance of communication

Communication is a big part of autonomy and competence. Help children express their ideas and listen to them when they do. The ability to communicate helps children affect the world around them. It doesn't have to be only verbal communication. Some children are very late talkers and use mime to help convey their meaning. Babies express their thoughts and feelings through their body language. When baby is tired of playing peek-a-boo, she will turn her head away to signal that she's had enough, at least for now.

It's also important to encourage children's explorations and

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celebrate their successes. When children and adults believe their own efforts are responsible for their successes, they see a direct relationship between effort and achievement. Children know that if they want something they can work to achieve it. Psychologists call this an *"internal locus of control."* Children and adults who feel they are buffeted by chance and the actions of others have an *"external locus of control."* Examples of this are: a child can't cut out a paper doll because the scissors are *stupid,* or the dough won't roll because the rolling pin is *broken.*

How adults can help

A sensitive adult encourages a child to see situations he can control and help him control them. Let's see how this would work. Four-year-old Timmy's shout of frustration brings his father to the kitchen table. Timmy has been trying and failing to cut out a picture from a magazine. "These scissors are stupid," he complains. His father says, "Well, maybe, but I've never seen a pair of stupid scissors. Why don't you cut out another picture and let me see what's going on?" As his father watches he sees Timmy wildly chopping with the scissors. "Whoa!" says his dad. "Why don't you cut really slowly and follow the outlines. If you have trouble seeing the outlines, I'll make them darker for you." Timmy follows his father's suggestions and successfully cuts out a picture.

Angela is trying to put on her shoes by herself. No matter how hard she tries she just can't seem to get her foot into the shoe. She carries the shoe to her mother. "This is broken," she announces as she drops the shoe on the floor. Her mother looks carefully at the shoe. "Do you think the opening is too small for your foot?" "Yes!" agrees Angela. "Do you think there is some way for us to make that opening larger?" asks her mother, "Maybe something to do with opening up these laces? Do you want to try that?" Angela nods as she tugs at the laces. "Now it's bigger," says Angela as she puts on the shoe.

What are the characteristics of autonomous and competent children? They approach tasks with the expectation that they will be successful, and interact with people with the expectation that they will be well received. They have confidence in themselves and their ability to achieve. They trust themselves to be able to handle situations and activities. They believe that they will be successful because they are competent and because they know how to work hard and solve problems which confront them.

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Dos and Don'ts

- Don't leave babies (less than 12 months of age) to 'cry it out' as a regular policy. They can come to decide that the world is not a caring or responsive place. Babies can't be 'spoiled' in the sense that they come to demand extraordinary amounts of attention. They cry and fuss because they are unhappy and upset. Yes, it is true that some babies need more attention than others. But they aren't being unreasonable from their point of view. They don't want to be alone or be in that crib. Babies should be treated as the center of the universe.

- Toddlers are ready to confront the world. Make their environment interesting and stimulating. They want to walk, investigate, explore. If they want to take everything out of drawers within their reach, why not set aside one or two baby drawers, full of interesting and safe objects for them to play with. But also remember that safety comes first.

- Toddlers are also ready to begin to solve challenges. Provide them with shape sorters, blocks, etc. But it isn't easy for them. Do make sure they have age-appropriate materials. Tiny blocks and shape sorters with intricate forms which are too similar to each other will frustrate these young preschoolers. Help them learn the shapes and share in their joy when one of those shapes is finally pushed through the opening.

- At each stage of development, let them proceed on their own until they reach their limits. Then step in and offer gentle suggestions: "Let's count the corners," "Are all the sides the same length? Let's measure." Make sure puzzle pieces are large and easy to use. And work with the youngster helping her to see where the piece goes. But if she wants to put a piece where it obviously won't fit, let her. The purpose is to learn and she can learn from mistakes too. Remember that the idea is to build a sense of competence and autonomy. If she is not allowed to make her own decisions, she may get the puzzle perfect, but she won't have done it herself.

- Don't take over projects — resist the temptation. You know you've taken over if you find yourself saying "Here, let me do that," or "That will never work." Then it's time to sit back and remember that the child is doing the playing and the learning. There is sometimes a thin line between providing the support to be successful and doing the puzzle for the youngster. Walk it carefully and with awareness.

- Do give them choices rather than open-ended options. Don't ask "Do you want to drink your milk?" it is too easy for a youngster to say, '"No!" It's one of their favorite words anyway. Give them a choice of drinking cups, or whether to drink milk or juice. If you say, "We're going out now; get something to wear," you could end up with a child holding a bathing suit insisting that it is appropriate clothing for February. Instead, say, "Pick one of your jackets to wear outside." It is better to create a situation in which all the decisions are choices you can be satisfied with.

Neala S. Schwartzberg

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

"I Think I Can, I Know I Can!" *Using Self-Talk to Help Raise Confident, Secure Kids,* by Susan Isaacs and Wendy Ritchey, Ph.D. St. Martin's Press, 1989. The authors explain to parents how their children can change inner negative voices into positive ones.

They're Never Too Young for Books: *A Guide to Children's Books for Ages 1 to 8,* by Edythe M. McGovern & Helen D. Muller. Prometheus Books (59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst NY 14228-2197, tel. 800/421/ 0351), 1994. A helpful guide to selecting books for young children. Includes titles listed by category, such as, *Books About Competence and Self-esteem.*

A Toddler's Life: *Becoming a Person,* by Marilyn Shatz. Oxford University Press, 1994. A scholarly, interesting book describing one little boy's passage through the toddler years.

Books for Children About Independence and Competence

All About All Of You, by Sue Clarke. Hyperion, 1994. A boxed set of 4 books entitled, ***Bodies, Clothes, Faces,*** and ***Feelings,*** telling how children are alike and different. Everyone has feelings, faces and bodies, but each child sees a different face in the mirror. The message comes through that every person is special.

City Green, by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan. Morrow,1994. Marcy and her neighbors transform a vacant city lot into a beautiful community garden in this upbeat, inspiring story. (Includes information about how you can start a garden in your own community.)

Honey, I Love, by Eloise Greenfield. *A Let's Read Aloud Book.* HarperFestival, 1995. A little African-American girl tells about all the things she loves — like her cousin from the South and the way he talks, the cool stream of water from a hose on a hot day, and her mama's soft, warm arm. And she ends with the thought that she loves herself too, in this appealing story in rhyme.

Amazing Grace, by Mary Hoffman. Dial, 1991. Grace loves to act out all kinds of stories. She listens to her grandmother's wise words, "You can be anything you want, Grace, if you put your mind to it." And she becomes an amazing Peter Pan in the school play.

Look, I'm Growing Up, by Marilyn Knoepfel and Betty Farber. Standard Publishing (1-800-543-1301), 1995. A variety of children tell how much they have learned to do since babyhood, such as: dress themselves, snap their fingers, sing a song, and so much more! Includes an "I Am Growing" song.

The Carrot Seed, by Ruth Krauss. Harper & Row, 1945. In this classic tale of faith, a little boy plants a carrot seed. Nothing that anybody says will discourage him and he is rewarded with a gigantic carrot.

Watch the Stars Come Out, by Riki Levinson. Puffin Books, 1995. A little girl listens as her grandmother tells the story of how she and her brother came to America on a boat across the Atlantic as children. The bravery of these youngsters on this long sea voyage makes a wonderful tale in English and also in the Spanish version, ***Mira Cómo Salen Las Estrellas.***

Jess Was the Brave One, by Jean Little. Puffin Books, 1995. Of the two sisters, Jess is the brave one, when they go to the doctor for shots, or climb trees, or watch a scary movie. Claire, on the other hand, has an overactive imagination. But one day, Claire's imagination saves the day, and she finds that she can be brave too.

The Adventures of Isabel, by Ogden Nash. Joy Street, Little, Brown, 1991. The poet, known for his humorous verse, tells the story of Isabel in rollicking rhyme. No matter what she encounters, Isabel is undaunted and handles each situation with confidence.

I Can, by Helen Oxenbury. Candlewick Press, 1995. A Baby Beginner Board Book that tells, with one word on each page, many things that a baby can do, like: sit, crawl, jump, and wave. A book for the youngest toddlers to enjoy.

The Hare and the Tortoise, in ***Aesop's Fables,*** retold in verse by Tom Paxton. Morrow, 1988. This collection of fables includes the well-known story about the race between the competent tortoise and the flighty hare, showing that "slow and steady wins the race."

The Smallest Stegosaurus, by Lynn Sweat and Louis Phillips. Puffin Books, 1995. His mother and father are nearly twenty feet long, but the baby stegosaurus is much smaller. He has not yet grown armor, and feels quite helpless. His parents bring him into the safety of their large nest and teach him to guard the egg that will hatch soon. The small stegosaurus finds he can help his family by warning them that another dinosaur, the ornitholestes, is coming to steal the egg. A lively story about a capable little dinosaur.

Home by Five, by Ruth Wallace-Brodeur. McElderry Books/Macmillan, 1992. When Rosie goes ice skating at the nearby rink, she knows she has to be home by five. All the distractions on the way can't slow her down because she promised her Papa to come straight home. But time can play tricks and Rosie arrives late. Her assurances to her parents wins them over, and they give her a gift that will help her to be home by five in the future.

Step by Step, by Diane Wolkstein. Morrow, 1994. A little ant travels to visit a friend, making its way step by step, with a feeling of accomplishment at journey's end.

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Just Foolin'!

Why not continue with the spirit of April Fool's Day by encouraging good fun at mealtimes?

My seven year old recently reminded me of the April Fool's Day when I put juice in the cereal bowls and breakfast cereal in the juice glasses.
"Can you do that again, Mommy?" she pleaded. Tricks are funny even when they are not a surprise, and sometimes even more, because we can anticipate what will happen. There are appropriate times and ways to "play" at mealtimes. Can you think of some April Fool's tricks on your own? Your preschooler is sure to catch on! Be sure to explain you are "just fooling!" Here are some ideas:

- Switching containers - If you usually serve juice in a cup, try a mug, or a bowl. Breakfast cereal can be placed in a cup or pan. If you serve cereal on a plate, your preschooler might ask, "What will happen when I pour on the milk?" Don't limit your tricks to breakfast. How about sandwich served on a cutting board or a sliced apple in a salad bowl?
- Switching order - do you ever have three-course meals? The salad first, then the main dish and finish with dessert? What kind of look would your preschooler give you if you served dessert first? Then continue your meal with the main dish and end with salad. If you try this one, let's hope you and your preschooler have room for the main meal.
- Hide & Seek - when you're serving spaghetti or another dish with sauce, hide the sauce by serving it first, then place the spaghetti on top. Some fine restaurants serve the sauce first for a dish such as veal parmigiana. This way, the breaded veal cutlet doesn't get soggy.
You can hide syrup under pancakes, cheese under crackers, margarine under bread...
- Switch Utensils - try eating soup with a fork, or salad with bread sticks, or rice with your fingers. How silly! Try eating a hamburger with a spoon, cereal with a fork and spaghetti with your fingers. Be sure to explain to your preschooler that you are only trying this out and this is not the norm. Every once and a while you might want to do it again, or you could just reserve April as the month for fun ways to eat.
- Upside down - when you set the table, set it with the cups and plates upside down. Have your preschooler help you "set it right" before serving.
- Switch places - do you have a certain place to sit? We do. One day you could sit where your preschooler usually sits, or use different chairs. If you have a dining room, eat there for no special reason.

April can be full of surprises not only in the way you eat, but what you serve. Here is a recipe for my grandmothers "Surprise Meat loaf." The surprise is — hard boiled eggs in the center. This meat loaf tastes delicious, looks pretty, and helps with food costs. Tell your preschooler there will be a surprise in the middle of the meat loaf, and see if they can guess what it is.

Surprise Meat Loaf

5 eggs
1 onion
1/4 cup bread crumbs
1 teaspoon salt
2 pounds ground beef

Fill a small saucepan about halfway with water. Add 1 tablespoon vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil. Turn down heat to medium. Use a spoon to gently place 3 of the eggs in the simmering water. Simmer for 15 minutes. Pour off hot water and cover with cold water. When the eggs are cool enough to handle (in only a few minutes) preschoolers can help peel hard boiled eggs; set aside.

As you and your preschooler crack the 2 remaining (uncooked) eggs into a large bowl, point out the difference between uncooked and hard boiled eggs. Using a cheese grater, grate onion and add to bowl along with bread crumbs, salt and ground beef. Mix thoroughly. Pack about a third of the meat mixture into 9x5x3-inch loaf pan, place hard boiled eggs on top, then surround hard boiled eggs with the remaining meat mixture. Bake in 375 degree oven for about 1 hour. When you cut meat loaf, try to include a circle of hard boiled egg in each slice. Yield: 6-8

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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Printed in U.S.A.

Subscription Rates
(U.S., Canada & Mexico)

English Language Edition
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

English/Spanish Language Edition
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
three year........99.00

All other countries add postage
US$12 for 1 year
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de avril, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, numero 2) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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Ayudando al prescolar a desarrollar autonomía y sentido de capacidad...

Mikey esta llorando en su cuna. Acaba de despertarse de la siesta y está listo para salir de los confines de su cama. Su padre entra a la habitación y sonriéndole, el niño le extiende sus brazitos diciendo "Yo afuera." Su padre también sonríe de vuelta, "Hola pequeño, dormiste suficiente?" Levanta a Mikey y dice, "Entonces ven, vamos a jugar."

Muchas veces pensamos que un pequeño demuestra autonomía cuando se decide a caminar solo, o cuando se niega a que un adulto le ayude a dibujar mejor la letra B. Pero la autonomía es algo que se inicia desde la infancia por medio de experiencias que le dan las personas que lo cuidan desde los primeros momentos de su vida. Y esto se demuestra en pequeñas gestos: una madre que percibe que el niño no quiere jugar a las escondidas, un niño que trata de caminar en la habitación, seguro de que su madre está allí si él la necesita, y el pequeño Mikey llamando a alguien que sabe que lo rescatará de su cuna.

Confianza básica

La autonomía comienza con el desarrollo de un sentido básico de confianza; la certeza que tiene el niño de poder apoyarse en las personas que lo cuidan. Creamos un sentido básico de confianza cuando atendemos en forma sensible al cuidado y las necesidades del bebé. Cuando él sabe que estaremos a su lado. Cuando tiene el conocimiento de que si necesita ayuda la recibirá, los pequeños comienzan a buscar y a explorar por si mismos.

Fomentamos la autonomía y la capacidad cuando alentamos a que nuestros niños aprendan y tengan éxito usando habilidades nuevas. Estas capacidades crecen cuando los niños se dan cuenta de que puede comunicarnos sus necesidades y que nosotros los escucharemos. Fomentamos la autonomía al convertirnos en un recurso para el niño, ayudando a que descubra soluciones a sus problemas en forma calmada y cuidadosa sin imponerles nuestras soluciones.

Desarrollando un sentido de iniciativa

Los niños desarrollan un sentido de iniciativa al explorar y manipular objetos. Cuando son pequeños, esto se puede ver en actividades tan sencillas como construir una torre con bloques, pegar calcomanías en una hoja, o intentar escribir una historia con garrapatos. A medida que crecen, comenzarán a desarrollar pequeños proyectos por sí solos: hacer una tarjeta de cumpleaños, organizar una fiesta para su muñeca, fingir vestirse como un adulto e ir de compras, o inventando máquinas increíbles. Este tipo de juegos ayuda a que desarrollen un sentido de autonomía y de capacidad y una actitud que dice "Yo lo puedo hacer." Si usted pone atención podrá escucharlo en sus propias palabras, "¡Mira la máquina que hice!" "¿No crees que mi tarjeta de cumpleaños es bonita?" Harán lo mismo cuando realicen alguna actividad física. "Mira como me columpio, lo puedo hacer muy alto!" "Puedo correr rápido, más rápido que tú." Usted debería validar y alentar la independencia y los logros de sus hijos. "Esa máquina es fantástica. Mira lo bien que pusiste las piezas." "Qué tarjeta tan bonita. A la tía Jean le gustará mucho." "Eres un corredor muy rápido."

Algunas veces esta exploración y experimentación no es lo que los adultos esperan. Muchos bebés han irritado a sus padres al botar la comida desde la silla de comer y ven como salpica al caer. Otros pequeños aprietan la comida entre sus dedos. ¿Niños problemáticos? — No, son niños que están aprendiendo sobre la ley de la gravedad, la relación entre la causa y el efecto, sobre la forma en que funcionan las cosas y su sobre su habilidad para hacer que sucedan ciertas cosas.

La importancia de la comunicación

La comunicación es una parte muy importante de la autonomía y la capacidad. Ayude a que el niño exprese sus ideas y usted debe escucharlo cuando lo haga. La habilidad para comunicar ayuda a que el niño influya en el mundo que lo rodea. No tiene que ser solamente comunicación verbal. Algunos niños aprenden a hablar tarde y utilizan la mímica para hacerse entender. Los bebés expresan sus pensamientos y sus sentimientos a través del lenguaje corporal. Cuando está cansado de jugar a las escondidas, volverá la cabeza en la dirección opuesta para señalar que ya ha tenido suficiente juego, al menos por ahora.

También es importante estimular a que el niño explore y celebrar sus logros. Cuando los niños y los adultos creen que su propio esfuerzo es responsable de sus logros, ven una relación directa entre el esfuerzo y el logro. Los niños saben que si quieren algo, pueden trabajar para lograrlo. Los sicólogos llaman a esto una "actitud de control interno." El niño o adulto que siente que es afectado por la casualidad o por las acciones de los demás tienen una "actitud de control

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externo." Algunos ejemplos de esto son: un niño que no puede cortar el papel en forma de muñeca porque las tijeras son *estúpidas*, o que la masa no se extiende porque el uslero está *roto*.

Como los adultos pueden ayudar

Un adulto sensible estimula a que el niño vea situaciones que puede controlar y le ayuda a dominarlas. Veamos como esto funciona. El grito de frustración de Timmy de cuatro años, llama la atención de su padre quien se dirige a la cocina. Timmy ha estado tratando de cortar una foto de una revista pero no lo ha logrado. Se queja de que, "Las tijeras son estúpidas." Su padre le dice, "Bueno, quizás, pero nunca he visto un par de tijeras estúpidas. ¿Por qué no tratas de cortar otra foto y me dejas ver lo que pasa?" El padre ve que Timmy usa mal las tijeras. "¡Ah!" dice. "¿Por qué no cortas bien despacio y sigues los bordes. Si no los ves, los hago más oscuros." Timmy sigue la sugerencia de su padre y corta la foto con éxito.

Angela trata de ponerse los zapatos sola. No importa cuanto trate, no consigue meter el pie dentro del zapato. Se lo lleva a su madre. "Esto está roto," le dice mientras deja caer el zapato sobre el piso. Su madre mira el zapato. "¿Crees que el zapato es muy pequeño para tu pie?" "¡Sí!" concuerda Angela. "¿Crees que haya alguna forma de hacerlo más grande?" le pregunta la madre, "¿Quizás soltando un poco los cordones? ¿Quieres probar así?" Angela señala que sí y suelta los cordones. "Ahora está más grande," dice Angela y se pone el zapato.

¿Cuáles son las características del niño autónomo y competente? Abordan las tareas con la expectativa de que lo lograrán, e interactúan con las personas con la expectativa de que serán bien recibidos. Tienen confianza en sí mismos y en su habilidad para lograr cosas. Confían en que sabrán cómo manejar diversas situaciones y actividades. Tienen la convicción de que tendrán éxito porque son competentes y porque saben como trabajar y resolver los problemas que enfrentan.

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Lo que se debe y lo que no se debe hacer

- No permita que el "llorar" se transforme en un mecanismo cotidiano. (Esto en el caso de menores de doce meses de edad). Los niños pueden comenzar a creer que el mundo no es un lugar donde hay buen cuidado y preocupación por ellos. El bebé no puede ser "mimado" en el sentido de que exijan cantidades excesivas de atención. Los niños lloran y molestan porque están descontentos y enojados. Sí, es verdad que algunos niños necesitan más atención que otros. Pero desde su punto de vista, creen estar siendo razonables. No quieren estar solos o estar en su cuna. El bebé debe ser tratado como si fuera el centro del universo.

- Los niños pequeños están listos para enfrentar el mundo. Haga que su entorno sea interesante y estimulante. Quieren caminar, investigar y explorar. Si quieren sacar todo de las gavetas que están a su alcance, por qué no dejarles un par de gavetas para ellos, llenas de cosas interesantes y de objetos seguros para jugar. Recuerde que la seguridad es lo primero.

- El niño pequeño también está listo para comenzar a resolver desafíos. Déles moldes, bloques, etc. Pero esto no es fácil para ellos. Asegúrese de que tengan juegos apropiados para su edad. Bloques demasiado pequeños, moldes con formas difíciles y muy similares entre sí, harán que el prescolar se complique y frustre. Ayúdelos a aprender las diferentes formas geométricas y comparta su felicidad cuando por fin logren calzar una de ellas en la apertura que corresponde.

- En cada nivel de desarrollo, deje que los niños lo hagan a su manera hasta que lleguen a un límite. Luego interceda y ofrezca soluciones: "Contemos las esquinas," "¿Son todos los lados del mismo largo? Midamos." Asegúrese que las piezas del rompecabezas sean grandes y fáciles de usar, y trabaje con el niño ayudándolo a ver dónde va cada pieza. Pero si quiere ponerla donde no cabe, déjelo. El propósito es aprender y los niños también pueden aprender de sus errores. Recuerde que la idea es lograr un sentido de capacidad y de autonomía. Si no dejamos que tomen sus propias decisiones, podrá armar el rompecabezas en forma perfecta, pero no será él el que lo hizo por sí mismo.

- No se haga cargo de los proyectos de los niños. Resista esta tentación. Sabrá cuando está en control si es que le dice, " A ver, déjame hacerlo yo" o, "Eso nunca funcionará así," Entonces es tiempo de sentarse y recordar que el niño está jugando y aprendiendo por sí mismo. A veces hay una separación poco clara entre el dar ayuda para que logre algo, y el hacer el rompecabezas para el niño. Mire esto con cuidado y conscientemente.

- Déle varias opciones en vez de limitarlo a respuestas de sí o no. No pregunte, "¿Quieres tomarte la leche?" Es muy fácil para un niño decir "¡No!" Además, es su palabra favorita. Déle la opción de elegir el vaso en que quiere tomar o si desea jugo o leche. Si le dice, "Ahora vamos a salir, escoge algo para ponerte," podría terminar con el niño sosteniendo un traje de baño, insistiendo que esa es la ropa apropiada para el mes de Febrero. En cambio, dígale, "Escoge una de tus chaquetas." Es mejor crear una situación en la que todas las decisiones sean elecciones con las cuales usted está satisfecho.

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Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
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Pp
Parent
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 3 An International Resource for Professionals and Parents May 1995

Dealing with unacceptable behaviors

No child is perfect, but teachers and parents know that there are some behaviors that are unacceptable. They are the ones that are likely to harm children physically or emotionally.

Two year olds can have terrible temper tantrums and sometimes bite other children. Threes can hit hard, push, and even scratch. Fours can hit even harder and send a former friend into tears with a choice name you are sure no one in your family ever used before. Fives can look like they are playing happily when closer examination reveals a group that has been organized by a child who gets loyalty by bullying.

Look at Timmy's face! That hurt him!

The earliest and most troublesome unacceptable behavior in the preschool is biting. It can sweep through a preschool like the measles. It stays in the two's room the longest, but even an angry four year old might leave those painful punctures in the shape of a leaf on some sweet arm. The victims howl; parents can be furious and demand immediate action. Preschool teachers groan inwardly. They know there is no instant cure.

Children who can't use their words well, often discover effective ways to show anger, get attention, or possess another child's toy. A child may have come upon the act of biting in babyhood days when parents played, "I'm going to eat you up..." Innocently using this social gesture, a playmate might be tasted with startling results. Just as a jack-in-the-box pops up with a push on a button, a preschooler may get intrigued with an act that gets a child to cry and teachers to scurry.

"Look at Timmy's face!" the experienced teacher says to the biter. "That hurt him! We don't hurt our friends. And I don't want anyone to hurt you either!" She lets the children know that she is there to protect everyone — both physically and emotionally. *Children make bad mistakes, but they are not bad people.*

Very young children vary in how they respond to adults' reactions to their biting. Oftentimes preschoolers are not mature enough to empathize with others. They cannot put themselves in the other person's place. This will take time. All the fuss made over the biting is as intriguing as the thrill they get when they zip down the playground slide. The reaction to this behavior is so interesting that young children want to do it over and over.

Nowadays parents may need instant reassurance that there are no known cases of the HIV virus being contracted through a bite. Health authorities consider a bite "casual contact" and casual contact is not dangerous, though a parent may consider it a heinous crime — until their child does it.

It's true that children learn from watching others. After seeing the uproar that comes with a bite, a child might use the same behavior when someone won't yield a tricycle on demand.

Because children learn from watching others, it is especially unfortunate if adults use the same unacceptable behaviors to control little children. Understandably, parents want to put a fast stop to biting. But the statement, "I bit him back and he never did it again," worries those who know that teaching children through physical pain can cause them to store resentment that can flare up in worse ways, later in life. Such methods do not teach cooperative living.

Information hot lines that serve parents are getting more questions about biting than they did previously. One hot line worker says children are angry because they don't want to be separated from their parents so much. When young children are left in a place where there is competition for space and toys, their anxiety grows and they sometimes lose control. They show their needs as best as they can, with a powerful part of their bodies — the teeth.

continued >>>>>

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Eventually, most children will graduate to expressing anger by hitting other children. Some of this is to be expected, but many children will hit very hard very often. When this happens, adults need to ask if the underlying cause has been addressed. In addition, they need to remind the child to, "Use your words! Tell her how you feel about that!"

As children get older and use their words, parents may be more shocked than pleased when the words the children use sound like those in an "R" rated movie. Earlier, teachers urged parents to understand that biting and hitting, although unacceptable behaviors, are usual for youngsters who are learning to control their impulses. Now these teachers work to help parents understand that using words is a great progression for the development of socialization and language as well.

Even though children in groups are experiencing negative ways to socialize, they are learning positive ones at the same time. It is the task of parents and teachers to guide the young child to want to use acceptable behaviors.

Bette Simons

Creating acceptable behaviors

Unacceptable behaviors can keep a child from having positive experiences, endanger others and take the teacher's attention away from curriculum plans.

When any child calls attention to himself or herself more than most through unacceptable behaviors, it's an occasion for the preschool to bring it to the parent's attention.

"But I never let him watch Power Rangers," an exasperated parent may say. It's true. Though most early childhood teachers wish parents would control the violent TV and videos available, some parents who do, still have children who seem constantly angry enough to be harming others a good part of the time. Whether the child is chronically uncomfortable with allergies, or jealous of a sibling, or feeling denied sufficient time with a parent, unacceptable behaviors must be unlearned.

Biting: The two year old who persists with biting, may be saying as best as he can, that he is angry about something that is happening either at home or in school — or both.

When very young children bite, it's best for adults to fuss over the bitten child and wash the wound with soap and water quickly. Hug the biter as well as the bitten child and treat the matter as a bad accident, so no negative power is handed to the child who used his teeth so effectively.

Older two's who are making a habit of biting need to hear from adults a firm reprimand: "NO BITING!" They must be removed from the area immediately. Teachers and parents can talk about biting apples, carrots, and toast, but not our friends.

If children don't feel well physically, biting can just be a way of saying, "I've had it; take care of me." Staying home from preschool with an extra dose of good parenting can help.

If biting persists with children close to four, it can be a display of intense anger. It's a child's cry for help with something in life that should be investigated. A counselor can help both the family and the school. If language is delayed and it's too frustrating to "use your words," a speech/language teacher can help.

Scratching, hitting, and kicking: When there is no attempt to determine the underlying cause of unacceptable behaviors, it is common to find that when biting stops, something else starts.

Preschools have materials that children can use to express anger about issues for which there is no cure. For example: parents must work, and children must be cared for in preschool. But preschoolers can scratch through the chocolate pudding on the finger painting paper. Children can beat the play dough with a mallet. They must learn that they may not squeeze the guinea pig, but they may squeeze the goop and poke holes in the clay. Small cardboard boxes can be kicked. Other safe items for hitting or kicking could be bean bags or an inflated Bozo.

Hitting is inevitable among children in groups. But children who hit with things like shovels must be stopped immediately and the implements removed. Later on, the adult can give the object back to the child, saying, "How will you use this now?" Giving the child many chances to do the right thing is as important as firmly stopping the wrong thing.

Startling words: The child that says, "That was a dumb thing to do!" when another child knocks over a carefully constructed block building, is using words to get along in the world. On the other hand, calling a child "Dumbie" or a worse name, requires adult intervention. The adult might say, "That's not his name; tell him what you didn't like." Little children tend to think that labels they are given stick to them, so name calling is often unacceptable as it damages the self image.

Adults sometimes forget to give credit to the child who used to bite, hit or kick, when he or she uses colorful language instead. If words are to have an impact, the preschool child who is using them forcefully, is operating at a higher level than previously. After a child is well finished with an outburst, an adult might say, "You are really, really, angry. I can tell by your words. Do you know what I say when I'm really mad? I say, 'I'm furious about that,' or 'This is unacceptable.' I say it loudly, just like you did. I don't swear; I don't need to."

Not all children bite, scratch, kick, hit or push. Children are born with different temperaments and some are naturally positive in their interactions with others, some more demanding. Some are very physical and some more passive. Parents and teachers can find ways to help children learn acceptable behaviors.

Author Bette Simons, M.S., left teaching in the Preschool Laboratory at The University of California at Northridge 11 years ago when she started First Step Nursery School and Child Development Center in Woodland Hills, CA., which has been accredited by the Academy of Early Childhood Programs since 1985.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books For Adults

Parents on the Spot! *What to Do When Kids Put You There,* by Judi Craig, Ph.D., Hearst Books/Wm. Morrow, 1994. This book is one of a series of Good Housekeeping Parent Guides, with lively, readable chapters dealing with real-life experiences. Includes articles on tantrums, hitting, and biting.

The Discipline Book: *Everything You Need to Know to Have a Better-Behaved Child — From Birth to Age ten,* by William Sears, M.D. & Martha Sears, R.N. Little, Brown, 1995. Encourages parents to develop a philosophy of discipline and offers tools to help with child rearing. A chapter on *Disciplining Bothersome Behaviors* includes a discussion of biting, hitting, pushing, kicking and bad language.

Books For Children About Behavior

My Brown Bear Barney in Trouble, by Dorothy Butler. Greenwillow, 1993. A little girl and her bear manage to get into mischief every day of the week. While things quiet down on Sunday, they look forward to Monday and the exciting week to come!

Kinderkittens: *Who Took the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?* by Stephanie Calmenson. Scholastic Cartwheel, 1995. The kittens love to sing their song about *Who Took the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?*
and the school principal comes by to listen. At snacktime, a cookie really is missing! Who is the culprit? Includes words & music to the song and a cookie recipe.

Big Help! by Anna Grossnickle Hines. Clarion, 1995. Sam's little sister, Lucy, always says, "Me help!" when Sam is playing happily by himself. And her helping usually spells disaster. When big brother Sam wants to draw a picture by himself, and Lucy cries, "Me help!" he thinks of the perfect solution.

The Tantrum, by Kathryn Lasky. Macmillan, 1993. A little girl sits quietly remembering the tantrum she had earlier in the day. She describes in detail all the things she did, like screaming, and making scuff marks on the wall with her feet. She tells about how each member of the family reacted. And how she suddenly stopped and couldn't remember what her tantrum was about. She looks forward to being grown up, when she won't have tantrums any more.

Me First, by Helen Lester. Houghton Mifflin, 1992. Pinkerton is a little pig who always wants to be first: first in line, first to get off the bus, and first to eat. Until, on a picnic at the beach, he encounters a sandwitch who teaches him that first is not always best.

The Tale of Custard the Dragon, by Ogden Nash. Little, Brown, 1995. Nash, the famous humorous poet, tells the story of a brave little girl, Belinda, and her cowardly dragon who longs for a nice safe cage. But when a pirate threatens Belinda and her pet animals, Custard the dragon saves them all.

King of the Playground, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. Aladdin Books edition, 1994. Kevin is afraid to go to the playground if Sammy is there. Sammy is always threatening to tie him up with a rope, or put him in a cage with wild bears, or other scary things. Kevin's Dad helps him think of imaginative ways to answer Sammy's threats.

Mind Your Manners, by Peggy Parish. Mulberry Read-Alone edition, 1994. A guide to using good manners, at a party, at a restaurant, when you are talking on the telephone, or even when somebody gives you a gift that you really don't like!

Yettele's Feathers, by Joan Rothenberg. Hyperion, 1995. Yettele loves to gossip and her stories are not always true. "Only words," she says, but her words can hurt people's feelings. One day she is taught a lesson when the Rabbi asks her to perform a most unusual task. This wise and funny story was inspired by an old Jewish folktale.

Mrs. Morgan's Lawn, by Barney Saltzberg. Hyperion, 1993. A little boy tells how his neighbor, Mrs. Morgan, doesn't want anything touching her lawn. Every time one of his balls lands on her lawn, she keeps it. She now has a collection of them. When the little boy goes to her house to ask her for them, she says she has a cold but does nothing about the balls. She's indoors for so many days that the leaves pile up on her lawn. The boy rakes the leaves for her, and when Mrs. Morgan is back outside, she returns all the balls, even the new purple-and-white soccer ball.

Caps for Sale: *A Tale of a Peddler, Some Monkeys and Their Monkey Business,* by Esphyr Slobodkina. HarperTrophy edition, 1987. HarperChildren's Audio Book & Cassette, 1995. This book has been a favorite of preschoolers since it was first published in 1940. It is now available as a set with audiocassette. It tells how a peddler carrying caps of many colors falls asleep against a tree-trunk. When he wakes up, he finds that monkeys up in the tree are wearing all of his caps. A wonderful story to dramatize.

EEk! There's a Mouse in the House, by Wong Herbert Yee. Houghton Mifflin, 1992. When a little girl discovers a mouse in the house, a cat is sent in to chase the mouse — then larger and larger animals ending with an elephant. This is an amusing circular story that ends as it began: "EEk! There's a Mouse in the House."

Crazy Clothes, by Niki Yektai. Aladdin Books edition, 1994. When Patrick tries to show his mother how well he can dress himself, he tells her that his clothes are not behaving correctly and are going on all the wrong parts of his body. His mother laughs at first. He sorts them all out, and dresses properly before his mother can get annoyed.

Oh No, Nicky! by Harriet Ziefert. A Puffin Lift-the-Flap Book, 1992. The youngest preschoolers will enjoy this book about a kitten who gets into all kinds of trouble. They can lift the flaps to learn how Nicky leans to stay safe.

What's Polite? by Harriet Ziefert. A Puffin Lift-the-Flap Book, 1995. At a restaurant with his mother and father, Scooter, the little boy pig, learns about saying "please" and "thank you" and what it means to be polite. Children will enjoy lifting the flaps as they read this story about a very polite family of pigs.

Bibliography
by Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Unacceptable Behaviors in the Kitchen

When determining unacceptable behaviors while cooking or at the table —allow for your preschooler's age and temperament. Here are guidelines to follow. Feel free to add to, or subtract from, the list.

While Cooking

encourage your preschooler not to:

- cook with dirty hands
- lick his/her fingers
- eat raw dough
- eat while cooking
- sneeze or cough on the food to be cooked
- leave in the middle of a task
- cook without an apron
- use sharp knives
- touch hot surfaces

At the Table

encourage your preschooler not to:

- get up and down from the chair while eating
- take food to eat while walking around
- stuff too much food in his/her mouth
- interrupt you while you are talking
- play with toys or books
- throw food
- shout or sing
- play with food (except when appropriate — see **P&p** 3/92)
- leave the table without asking to be excused

Now that Spring is here, why not have an indoor garden? Your preschooler might think it is unusual to have a garden indoors, but this is a very small one. This is "the exception that proves the rule."

Mustard Seed Sprouts

paper towel
water
mustard seed

Use a glass 9x5-inch loaf pan. Assist your preschooler in folding two sheets of thick paper towel or terry cloth dish towel in half or thirds to fit in the loaf pan. Saturate with water. Check every few days to see that it is moist; add water if necessary. Tell your preschooler she is planting an indoor garden as she scatters mustard seed, in a single layer, on the wet paper towel. Cover with tin foil. Leave overnight. Remove the foil. Set in a sunny window. Have a certain time each day when you and your preschooler check on the Mustard Seed Sprouts. Harvest in 10-12 days. To harvest: snip sprouts with a scissors. Use in recipes below or as desired.

Sprout Tea Sandwiches

mustard seed sprouts (see above)
cream cheese
bread

Chop sprouts and mix with cream cheese. Your preschooler can spread it on bread and place on top piece of bread. Cut into fourths and serve on a pretty platter.
Variation: spread cream cheese on bread and leave sprouts whole.

Sprout Garnish

Let your preschooler pull or snip off some mustard seed sprouts. Garnish any plate with a few sprigs.

Sprout Egg Salad

4 eggs
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 stalk celery, diced
1 tablespoon chopped mustard seed sprouts

Fill a small saucepan about halfway with water. Add 1 tablespoon vinegar and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil. Turn down heat to medium. Use a spoon to gently place the eggs in the simmering water. Simmer for 15 minutes. Pour off hot water and cover with cold water. When the eggs are cool enough to handle (in only a few minutes) preschoolers can help peel hard boiled eggs by cracking on a paper towel. When the shell is off, rinse under cool water. Set on cutting board.

Chop hard boiled eggs and place in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Preschoolers can help mix in mayonnaise, celery and sprouts. Add salt or spices, if desired. Use on sandwiches, with crackers, or serve on a bed of lettuce.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
three year........99.00

**All other countries add postage**
US$12 for 1 year
US$24 for 2 years
US$36 for 3 years

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Pp
Parent
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de mayo, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 3) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Como tratar conductas inaceptables

Ningún niño es perfecto, pero tanto la profesora como los padres saben que algunos tipos de conductas son inaceptables. Estas son los que le pueden hacer daño al niño física o emocionalmente.

Los niños de dos años pueden sufrir terribles ataques de mal genio y a veces hasta pueden morder a otros niños. Los de tres años de edad pegan fuerte, empujan y rasguñan. Los de cuatro puede pegar aún más duro y hacer que un amigo se eche a llorar y decir apodos y sobrenombres que usted nunca escuchó en casa. El niño de cinco puede aparentar que está jugando felizmente, pero cuando se observa de cerca, se verá que el grupo ha sido organizado por un niño que intimida a lo demás.

Cuando los preescolares muerden...
El morder es la conducta que se manifiesta a más temprana edad y es la más problemática e inaceptable. Esta conducta puede propagarse por la escuela como el sarampión. En la sala de los niños de dos años es donde esta conducta se presenta por más tiempo, pero hasta un niño de cuatro años enojado puede dejar marcas en el brazo de su compañero. Las víctimas gritan. Los padres pueden enfurecerse y exigir medidas inmediatas pero la profesora sabe que no hay un cura instantánea que detenga esta conducta.

Los niños que no tienen un buen dominio del lenguaje, a menudo descubren maneras efectivas para demostrar su enojo, llamar la atención o poseer el juguete de otro. El niño puede haber descubierto el acto de morder cuando era más pequeño y sus padres jugaban diciéndole, "Te voy a comer...." Usando este gesto de manera inocente, el amigo de juegos puede ser "saboreado" con resultados alarmantes. Al igual que el titere de un caja de sorpresa salta cuando se presiona un botón, el preescolar puede fascinarse con una conducta que haga llorar a otro niño y que haga que las profesoras salgan disparados.

"Mira la cara de Timmy!" le dice la profesora al niño que lo mordió. "Eso le dolió! No le hacemos daño a nuestros amigos. Y no quiero que nadie te hagan daño a ti tampoco." Ella deja que los niños sepan que está ahí para protegerlos a todos tanto emocional como físicamente. *El niño comete errores pero no es malo.*

Los niños pequeños que muerden responden de diversas formas frente a las reacciones del adulto. Muchas veces el preescolar no es lo suficientemente maduro como para establecer lazos con los demás. No pueden ponerse en el lugar de otra persona. Esto toma tiempo. Todo el alboroto que se arma cuando el pequeño muerde a otro es tan fascinante como la emoción que viven cuando bajan por el resfalín en el parque de juegos. La reacción ante este tipo de conducta es tan interesante que los niños pequeños quieren hacerlo una y otra vez.

Hoy en día los padres pueden necesitar que se les reasegure de que no existen casos de contagio del virus del VIH por medio de una mordida. Las autoridades de la salud consideran a una mordida como "contacto casual" y que el contacto casual no es peligroso, pero el padre considera que es un crimen atroz — hasta que su hijo lo hace.

Es verdad que el niño aprende observando a los demás. Luego de ver el alboroto que provoca un mordida, el niño puede usar este mismo tipo de comportamiento cuando no le quieran dar el tricíclo que pidió.

Debido a que el niño aprende observando a los demás, resulta bastante desafortunado que los padres utilicen el mismo tipo de conducta inaceptable para controlar al pequeño. Es comprensible que quieran terminar con esta conducta. Pero la afirmación, "Yo lo mordí y nunca más lo hizo," preocupa a los que saben que el enseñar al niño por medio del dolor físico puede hacer que guarde resentimiento y que este se pueda manifestar de peor forma más adelante. Este tipo de métodos no enseñan a vivir de manera cooperativa.

Las líneas de telefónicas de información que ayudan a los padres, reciben cada vez más preguntas sobre esta conducta. Un operador de esta línea dice que los niños están molestos porque no quieren separarse de sus padres por tanto tiempo. Cuando se deja al niño en un lugar donde se compite por el espacio y los juguetes, su ansiedad crece y a veces pierde el control. Demuestra sus necesidades de la mejor manera posible, con una poderosa parte de su cuerpo — los dientes.

A la larga, la mayoría de los niños terminará mostrando su enojo pegándole a los demás niños. Esto es normal, pero la mayoría pegarán a otros muy seguido y demasiado fuerte. Cuando esto suceda, el adulto debe preguntar si se resolvió el problema de fondo. Además,

continuará >>>>>>

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recordarle al niño y decirle, "Usa palabras! Dile lo que sientes, pero no debes golpear."

Cuando el preescolar aprende a usar palabras...
A medida que los niños crecen y utilizan palabras para expresarse, el padre puede espantarse en vez de ponerse feliz cuando escucha al hijo usando palabras que parecen sacadas de un película para adultos. (Ver **P&p** 5/94) Anteriormente, el profesor pedía a los padres que entendieran que el morder y pegar, aunque son conductas inaceptables, son comunes en los pequeños que están aprendiendo a controlar sus impulsos. Ahora, los profesores trabajan ayudando a que el padre comprenda que el uso de las palabras es un gran paso en el desarrollo de las capacidades de socializar que tiene el niño. Y que además ayuda al desarrollo del lenguaje.

Si bien el niño aprende conductas negativas al interior de un grupo, al mismo tiempo aprende conductas positivas. Es tarea de los padres y de los profesores el guiar al niño para que adopte conductas aceptables.

Bette Simons

Lo que los padre puede hacer cuando se presentan conductas inaceptables

Las conductas inaceptables pueden impedir que el niño tenga experiencias positivas; pueden poner en peligro a los demás y hacer que el profesor desvíe su atención a asuntos que no están incluidos en programa educacional.

Cuando el niño acapara la atención repetidas veces, por medio del uso de conductas inaceptables, es hora de que la escuela avise a los padres.

Un padre desesperado puede decir, "Pero yo nunca dejo que vea Power Rangers por la televisión." Es verdad. Aunque la mayoría de los profesores quisieran que los padres controlen la violencia a la que se ven expuestas sus hijos en la televisión y en los videos, padres que sí lo hacen igual tienen niños que parecen estar molestos constantemente y dañan a los demás. Aunque el niño sufra de alergias, o esté celoso del hermano o sienta que los padres no le dan la atención que él quiere, las conductas inaceptables deben ser des-aprendidos.

Morder: El niño de dos años que insiste en morder, puede estar tratando de decir de la mejor manera que conoce que está infeliz en la casa o en el la escuela, o en ambas partes. Cuando los niños muy pequeños muerden, es mejor que el adulto se preocupe del herido y limpie la herida con agua y con jabón. Debe abrazar a los dos y tratar al problema como si fuera un accidente de manera de no transmitir la sensación de poder en forma negativa al niño que mordió.

El niño mayor de dos años que está haciendo del morder un hábito, necesita oir una reprimenda firme: "NO MUERDAS!" Debe abandonar el lugar en seguida. Los profesores y los padres pueden hablar de morder manzanas, zanahorias y tostadas, pero no a nuestros amigos.

Si el niño no se siente bien físicamente, el morder puede ser una manera de decir, "Estoy harto; cuídenme." El quedarse en casa y no ir a la preescuela junto con una dosis de buen cuidado pueden ayudar.

Si el morder persiste en los niños de casi cuatro años de edad, esto puede ser demostración de enojo. Es la manera que tiene el niño de pedir ayuda sobre algo que tiene que averiguarse. Un consejero puede ayudar tanto a la familia como a la escuela. Si está atrasado en cuanto al uso del lenguaje y le es muy frustrante usar palabras, un profesor de fonoaudiología puede ayudar.

Rasguñar, pegar y patear: Cuando no hay la intención de encontrar el problema de fondo que hace que hace que el niño muerda, es común que cambie este comportamiento por otro después de un tiempo.

Las preescuelas tienen materiales que los niños pueden usar para expresar el enojo que sienten frente asuntos que no tienen solución. Por ejemplo: los padres deben trabajar y los niños deben quedarse en la escuela. Pero el preescolar puede poner a jugar con el postre de chocolate y luego pasar el dedo sobre papel de pintar. Los niños pueden pegarle a la plasticina con un mazo. Deben aprender que no pueden apretar al conejillo de indias, pero que sí pueden hacerlo con un muñeco de juguete y hacer agujeros en la greda. Sí pueden patear las cajas de cartón. Otros objetos seguros para pegar y patear pueden ser la pelota, las bolsas de fréjoles o el payaso Bozo (mono porfiado).

Los golpes son inevitables cuando los niños están en grupos. Pero a los que pegan con objetos como una pala se les tiene que detener y retirar el objeto. Más adelante, el adulto se lo puede entregar y decirle, "¿Cómo lo utilizarás ahora?" Darle al niño la mayor cantidad de oportunidades para que haga las cosas bien es tan importante como detenerlo cuando lo hace mal.

Palabras asombrosas: El niño que dice, "Qué tonto!" cuando otro niño bota una torre de bloques, está usando palabras para entenderse con el mundo. Por otro lado, cuando un niño le dice a otro "tonto" o lo llama con un nombre peor, entonces deberá intervenir un adulto. El adulto puede decir, "Ese no es su nombre; dile lo que no te gustó." Los niños pequeños tienden a pensar que cuando les ponen un sobrenombre se les queda, así que el decirse nombres no es aceptable porque destruye la propia imagen.

El adulto a veces se olvida de premiar al niño que antes mordía, pegaba o pateaba, y que ahora usa el lenguaje. Si las palabras van a tener un impacto, el preescolar que las está usando frecuentemente, está pensando y desarrollándose en un nivel más alto que antes. Después de que al niño se le pasa el arranque de mala conducta, el adulto puede decirle, "Estás muy, muy enojado. Me doy cuenta por tus palabras. ¿Sabes lo que digo yo cuando estoy muy enojado? Digo, 'estoy furioso con eso,' o 'esto es inaceptable.' Lo digo fuerte igual que tú. No digo malas palabras; no lo necesito."

No todos los niños muerden, rasguñan, patean, pegan o empujan. Los niños nacen con diferentes temperamentos. Algunos son naturalmente positivos al interactuar con los demás y hay otros que son más exigentes. Algunos se expresan por medio del contacto físico y otros son más pasivos. Es un verdadero reto, pero los padres y los profesores pueden buscar maneras para hacer que los niños aprendan conductas aceptables.

La autora, Bette Simons, M.S., dejó la enseñanza en el Laboratorio de la Preescuela de la Universidad de California en Northridge hace 11 años atrás, cuando comenzó con el First Step Nursery School and Child Development Center en Woodland Hills, CA. Este ha sido reconocido por la Academy of Early Childhood Programs desde 1985.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 4 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *June 1995*

Making relaxation part of children's lives . . .

Weekday mornings, Jennifer awakens, gets washed and dressed, eats breakfast, and brushes her teeth in the 45 minutes before her mother drives her to preschool. There she spends mornings and afternoons participating in the business of playing, learning, and socializing.

Late on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, Jennifer's father picks her up and takes her to gymnastics. On Fridays, Jennifer has violin lessons.

Every evening after dinner, which is often rushed and seldom enjoyed by all family members due to hectic schedules, Jennifer watches a little TV, takes a bath, and goes to bed early in preparation for another busy day.

Such is the life of many preschoolers. Gone are the carefree days of leisurely play, of unscheduled hours that could be filled with alternating rhythms of physical activity and such leisurely pursuits as lying in the grass, imagining creatures in the clouds.

Not only are today's young children maintaining busier, adult-like schedules, but they are also confronted with stresses and anxieties that their predecessors could never have imagined. If they aren't facing family crises or problems of poverty in their own lives, they have friends who are. Or they're bombarded by the media with images and examples of society's many ills.

Learning to relax

More than ever, children need to know how to relax. They must be able to find a quiet place inside themselves that allows them to cope — in order to maintain control of their bodies and feelings. Just "resting" is generally not enough; children must be capable of immersing themselves in total relaxation. Clare Cherry, author of *Think of Something Quiet* (see Library Resources, page 3), tells us children are entitled to experience serenity. She writes: "If children never learn how to turn inward they may be affected adversely by unrelieved stress."

Though most would agree relaxation is beneficial, many people are unaware relaxation is a learned skill; it must be encouraged and practiced. Moreover, relaxation must be valued by the important adults in children's lives. If it is, children are more likely to take some quiet time during the course of each busy day to "turn everything off."

Benefits of relaxation

More and more, researchers are discovering the correlation between stress and physical and mental illnesses. This means the child who does learn to relax will have the ability to manage stress and, therefore, live a healthier (not to mention more tranquil) life. Knowing when and how to relax also ensures a more energetic life, as stress is most certainly an energy robber. Relaxation techniques, however, help "recharge the batteries."

On a more basic level, experience with relaxation helps children gain greater motor control. Children who can voluntarily relax will have more control over their bodies in general. This means they will be able to start and stop their movements with ease and to execute slow and sustained, as well as fast, movements. A child who takes the time to relax will have the chance to experience motionlessness, giving more meaning, in contrast, to the body's movement. Whether or not the child chooses to participate in sports, dance, or other organized physical activities, such coordination leads to greater poise and self-control and an overall feeling of comfort with one's own body.

If imagery is used to encourage relaxation, the child's ability to imagine is enhanced. With so many ready-made images available to children in today's world (with television, computers, videos, and the like), the ability to imagine is becoming less and less necessary. How frightening to envision a world in which people are incapable of seeing beyond what already exists, of imagining the solutions to problems and challenges, or putting themselves in the place of others (i.e. feeling empathy).

continued >>>>>

In This Issue: Suggestions for Parents...2; Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

Similarly, if music is used to encourage relaxation, the child is exposed to the world of quiet, peaceful music (in contrast to what is commonly heard on radio or television). This can result in a greater appreciation for aesthetics — heightening the child's awareness of, and sensitivity to, beauty.

Finally, the research of Dr. Edmund Jacobsen, a leading authority on the subject of relaxation, demonstrates tension control helps children learn better. In all probability, tension control helps anyone, of any age, do *anything* better!

Rae Pica is a movement specialist who believes in the importance of ending classes with a relaxation exercise. She is the author of the Moving & Learning Series, published by Human Kinetics (800/747-4457), and of the recently-released textbook, Experiences in Movement, *published by Delmar (800/347-7707).*

Suggestions for parents

Any number of physical signs can warn you that your preschooler is feeling stressed. These include excessive or rapid talking, muscular tenseness, a belligerent attitude, unusual listlessness or hyperactivity and unprovoked tears. Taking the time to relax should be a routine part of every day — for children and adults alike. But relaxation techniques will be especially needed if your child shows any of these symptoms of stress.

Setting the stage

Whether it's a daily routine or required because of a stressful situation, you can set the stage for relaxation by darkening the room, speaking slowly and softly, and moving gently. If you decide to use music to promote tranquillity, choose pieces you're already familiar with — that you've found to be peaceful and soothing. Most often, that means instrumental selections, although a number of children's recordings now available for relaxation include lyrics intended to soothe (see Library Resources, page 3).

With or without lyrics, the songs should be arranged simply, with few changes in rhythm or tempo. If the music is only intended to set the stage while your child performs relaxation exercises (see below), keep the volume much lower than if the music itself were the focus of the activity. (Too much external stimulation will defeat the cause.) If the music *is* the focus, you can sometimes encourage your child to lie quietly with eyes closed. Other times you might suggest that your preschooler listen for something specific, like a certain sound or instrument.

Using imagery

If you choose to use imagery to promote relaxation, be sure it's imagery your young children can relate to. Show them a rag doll or a wet dish rag, or talk to them about the difference between uncooked and cooked spaghetti. Then ask them to pretend to be one of these objects.

You can also paint a picture in their minds. Ask them to lie on the floor and imagine, for example, they're at the beach. Talk to them (softly) about the warmth of the sun, the cool breeze, and the gentle sounds of the waves and the gulls circling overhead.

Breath control

Breath control plays an important role in relaxation. When we inhale slowly and then exhale twice as slowly, we decrease the supply of oxygen and increase the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood, thus slowing down the activity of the nerves and brain. To promote deep breathing, you can ask the children to expand (by inhaling) and contract (by exhaling) like balloons, alternately (and slowly) inflating and deflating. Initially demonstrating with an actual balloon can help make this image more vivid.

Controlling muscular tension

The ability voluntarily to control muscular tension is also critical to relaxation. Because preschoolers won't understand the terms *contract* and *release, you* can play a game based on the words *calm* and *nervous*.

Explain that calm is a very relaxed feeling — like that experienced just before falling asleep at night. Other times that children might have experienced a feeling of calm include: sitting by a lake, observing a bird soar through the sky, or watching the sun set. At such times, muscles feel loose and "liquid." Nervous, on the other hand, is something like a combination of scared and worried. Preschoolers may have worried it might rain on the day of a big outing, or they may have lost sight of parents in a big store and felt nervous until spotting them again. How did their muscles and bodies feel at those times? Were they loose or tight? Ask them to demonstrate.

Once your children have the idea, explain that when you say the word *calm*, they should make their bodies as relaxed as possible. When you *say nervous*, they tighten up. (Vary the time between verbal cues, and use the quality of your voice to invoke the proper response.) Do this first with the children standing. Then repeat the process with the children kneeling, sitting, and, finally, lying down.

"Melting" is also a wonderful — and fun — relaxation activity. Talk about the melting of ice cream cones, snow sculptures, and ice cubes. Then ask your preschooler to pretend to be one of these things and to show you just how slowly he or she can melt.

And don't forget — relaxation is important for adults, too. Don't just encourage your children to relax; whenever possible, do it with them!

Rae Pica

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

Think of Something Quiet, by Clare Cherry. Carthage, IL: Fearon, 1981. Although this book is subtitled "A Guide for Achieving Serenity in Early Childhood Classrooms," this fine publication is for any adults who want to help their children find serenity. It's filled with techniques for responding to the tension and stress children experience, and activities for helping children learn how to reduce their own tension and experience relaxation.

Quiet Times: Relaxation Techniques for Early Childhood, by Louise Binder Scott. T.S. Denison & Co., 1986. This resource deals with the problems of tension, restlessness and inattentiveness due to overstimulation and feelings of insecurity in young children. It features 11 child-oriented stories for relaxation, 35 helpful devices to induce relaxation, 23 action rhymes for relaxation, and 16 child-centered poems for quiet feelings.

Books for Children About Quiet Times

The Sleeping Porch, by Karen Ackerman. Morrow, 1995. Jonathan and his family are thrilled to move to a big house from their small apartment. But one hot summer night, there is a terrible storm and the roof starts to leak. Where can they sleep? The whole family troops onto the sleeping porch, where the stars twinkle, the breeze softly blows, and everybody watches the fireflies until they fall asleep.

Taxi, Taxi, by Cari Best. Little, Brown, 1994. There are Spanish phrases sprinkled throughout this upbeat story, in which Tina spends every Sunday with her papi, who comes to pick her up in his taxi. This Sunday, they drive into the country to have lunch by a pond, and papi buys Tina a special present. Winner of the Ezra Jack Keats award.

Rabbit's Good News, by Ruth Lercher Bornstein. Clarion Books, 1995. A little rabbit peeks out of her warm burrow to discover the soft green sound of spring.

A Child's Good night Book, by Margaret Wise Brown. Harper-Collins, New Edition, 1992. A classic bedtime book, first published in 1943. The soothingly repetitious words tell how each little animal, and finally, the children, all go to sleep.

Good Morning, Pond, by Alyssa Satin Capucilli. Hyperion Books, 1994. As the pond comes to life with frogs, ducks, dragonflies, and other creatures, three little children come to peek quietly and to look up at the soft white clouds.

Wishing at Dawn in Summer, by Nancy White Carlstrom. Little, Brown, 1993. A brother and sister get up early to fish in the lake, play a game with wishes, and watch the sun come up.

If Once You Have Slept on an Island, by Rachel Field. Mulberry Books edition, 1995. The poetry of Rachel Field and the enchanting watercolors of Iris Van Rynbach combine in a tribute to the peace and joys of island life.

I Pretend, by Heidi Goennel. Tambourine, 1995. Throughout her everyday activities, such as playing in the sand, mixing paint, or playing with her cat, a little girl pretends all sorts of wonderful things. (The daily activities are pictured with black and white line drawings, while the products of her imagination are in vivid colors.)

Sleep, Baby, Sleep: *Lullabies and Night Poems,* selected and illustrated by Michael Hague. Morrow, 1994. A collection of nighttime poems written by such poets as William Blake, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Nikki Giovanni, as well as traditional folk lullabies. Also included are several musical arrangements. The illustrations depict children of many different cultures.

Quiet, Please, by Sheila Hamanaka. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. This gentle nature poem encourages children ages 3 to 7 to listen to the soft, sometimes silent sounds of nature ("Milkweed pods, their silky threads sprinkling the air...Buttermilk clouds scudding across the horizon"). Delicate but rich illustrations bring life to the poem's images.

The Quiet Evening, by Thacher Hurd. Greenwillow, 1992. It is evening and everyone is thinking quiet thoughts. The family is settling down for the night, and far away every aspect of life seems to be serene: people in boats, the fish in the ocean, even the earth itself. A perfect book to evoke tranquil feelings.

What Is the Sun? by Reeve Lindbergh. Candlewick Press, 1994. In a bedtime dialog between a boy and his grandmother, she answers his questions about the sun, moon, wind, and rain with love and understanding.

All the Places to Love, by Patricia MacLachlan. Harper-Collins, 1994. With words of love and remembrance, a little boy tells about the beauty of the land where he grew up: "The valley, The river falling down over rocks, The hilltop where the blueberries grew." (The author of this poetic story won the 1986 Newbery Medal for *Sarah, Plain and Tall,* which is now available from HarperChildren's*Audio* on cassette, read by Glenn Close.)

River Day, by Jane B. Mason. Macmillan, 1994. Alex and her grandpa enjoy a special relationship as they go canoeing together on the river.

Fireflies for Nathan, by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim. Tambourine Books, 1994. Nathan visits his grandparents, and spends a magical evening catching fireflies just as his daddy did when he was a boy.

The Goodbye Walk, by Joanne Ryder. Lodestar, 1993. A girl says goodbye to the special places she loved as her summer vacation ends.

The Big Big Sea, by Martin Waddell. Candlewick Press, 1994. A little girl and her mother take a nighttime walk to the sea. They are all alone on a moonlit beach as they splash in the water, and then walk on the sand. It's an experience to treasure always.

Albums for Children

- Hap Palmer's *Quiet Places* and *Sea Gulls*
- Joanie Bartel's *Lullaby Magic I* and *Lullaby Magic II*
- Derrie Frost's *Quiet Time* and *Daydreams*
- Greg & Steve's *Quiet Moments with Greg & Steve*
- *Quiet Times* and *Classical Quiet Times,* part of *More Music for Moving & Learning by* Rae Pica & Richard Gardzina
- *Lullaby Time for Little People, Let's Visit Lullaby Land,* and *Daydreams,* all produced by Kimbo Educational Records

These recordings and many others are available from:
Educational Activities:
1-800-645-3739
Educational Record Center:
1-800-438-1637
Melody House:
1-800-234-9228
Music for Little People:
1-800-727-2233
Rae Pica's recordings and books are available from:
Human Kinetics:
1-800-747-4457.

Bibliography by Rae Pica
and Betty Farber

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Ice Cream Social

When the weather turns warmer, it's fun and refreshing to eat cool summer treats. Ice cream is one food we think of eating when the weather gets warm. And because of consumer awareness and demand, ice cream manufacturers have been creating a variety of ice cream treats that are low in fat, sugar, and preservatives. You might want to read the list of ingredients to know just what you are buying. You and your family can discuss which frozen treat is best for your needs. Here are some definitions to help you decide:

- Ice cream: is made by combining cream, flavoring, sugar, and sometimes eggs, and then freezing the mixture in an ice cream freezer, which stirs the mixture while it is freezing to prevent ice crystals. Ice cream is high in butterfat.
- Ice milk: is made with milk instead of cream and has about half the butterfat.
- Frozen yogurt: is made with milk, yogurt cultures, sugar, and a jelling agent.
- Sherbet: is made with egg whites, fruit, sugar, and water or milk.
- Sorbet or ices: is made with fruit, sugar and water.

History

According to *The Horizon Cookbook and Illustrated History of Eating and Drinking Through the Ages*, ice cream was introduced by Florentine cooks at a very important wedding, "Ice cream, the successor to water ices and sherbets, was born in sixteenth-century Tuscany and made its French debut at the wedding of Catherine de' Medici." It took 300 years before the French public, and then only the wealthy public, was able to feast regularly on this delicacy, "...by the middle of the nineteenth century there were dozens of [ice cream] shops catering to idle rich and aspiring middle class alike."

During the 19th century, and ice cream desserts called "Bombes" were popular faire at banquets. A Bombe is composed of layers of ice cream in a mold or deep bowl with a candy or crushed cookie center. The Bombe is removed from the mold, decorated with whipped cream and served with a chocolate sauce or fruit garnish. Other ice cream desserts are Baked Alaska, in which ice cream is encased in meringue and baked, Parfaits, ice cream layered with fruit, nuts and whipped cream, and Sundaes, ice cream topped with fruit or chocolate syrup.

Let's Share

One way you and your preschooler can enjoy the type of ice cream you choose is by sharing it with family or friends. If the weather is pleasant, plan on an outdoor activity. An Ice Cream Social can involve making ice cream or simply eating store-bought ice cream.

Each person who comes can bring a topping, such as chopped fresh fruit. Your preschooler can help you pick out the topping and do some preparation (when sharp knives are not involved). Summer fruits, such as strawberries or peaches, or tropical fruits, such as bananas or pineapple, taste great with ice cream. For strawberries, rinse, hull and slice in half or fourths. For peaches, rinse, pit and pare if desired. Cut into pieces. For bananas, wait until just before serving to peel and slice. For pineapple, cut off crown and stem end, trim off peel and "eyes," cut out core, then cut into chunks.

Mix-ins: you can flavor store-bought ice creams with any flavor of your choice, making a more nutritious dessert.

POSSIBLE MIX-INS:

1 qt. vanilla ice cream,
softened and mixed with
3/4 cup peanut butter
or 1 cup cookie crumbs
or 1 cup blueberries
or 1 cup apple bits and
1 teaspoon cinnamon
or create your own

HOME-MADE PEACH ICE CREAM

2 cups (about 4) peaches,
pared and sliced
1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 quart heavy cream (try
with 1/2 milk, if desired)

Mash and mix thoroughly: peaches, sugar, and lemon juice. Let mixture stand 30 minutes. Stir in cream and freeze in ice cream freezer (follow manufacturers directions) or pour into ice cube trays or pan. If freezing in trays or pan, stir every 30 minutes until frozen. Yield: 2 qts. ice cream, about 12 servings.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
three year........99.00

**All other countries add postage**
US$12 for 1 year
US$24 for 2 years
US$36 for 3 years

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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de junio, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 4) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Como hacer de la relajación una parte de la vida del niño...

En las mañanas durante la semana, Jennifer despierta, se lava, se viste, toma desayuno y se lava los dientes. Todo esto lo hace en 45 minutos, antes de que su madre la lleve a la preescuela. Ahí pasa las mañanas y las tardes jugando, aprendiendo y relacionándose con los demás. Los martes y jueves por la tarde, el padre de Jennifer la pasa a buscar para llevarla a clases de gimnasia. Los viernes tiene clases de violín. Todos los días después de la cena -que generalmente es rápida y que los miembros de la familia disfrutan poco debido a sus horarios apurados- Jennifer ve un poco de televisión, se baña y se va a la cama temprano para prepararse para el día siguiente, el que será igual de ocupado.

Así es la vida de muchos preescolares. Han pasado al olvido los días sin preocupaciones y de juegos tranquilos. Eran jornadas sin horarios en que se podían realizar diferentes tipos de actividades físicas, con ratos libres para echarse sobre el césped e imaginarse animales en las nubes.

Los niños de hoy en día no sólo se mantienen más ocupados con sus horarios diseñados como si fueran de adultos, pero también se están enfrentando a un nivel de estrés y de ansiedad que sus antecesores nunca hubiesen imaginado. Si no están pasando por crisis familiares o problemas de pobreza en el hogar, tienen amigos que sufren estas situaciones. Además, son bombardeados constántemente por los medios de comunicación con imágenes y ejemplos de los males que existen en la sociedad.

Aprender a relajarse

Hoy, más que nunca, los niños deben aprender a relajarse. Deben ser capaces de encontrar un lugar tranquilo dentro de ellos mismos que les ayude a hacer frente a las cosas - de manera de poder controlar sus cuerpos y sus sentimientos. Generalmente "descansar" no es suficiente; los niños deben ser capaces de sumergirse en una relajación total. Clare Cherry, la autora de *Think Of Something Quiet (Piensa En Algo Tranquilo)* (Ver Library Resources, página 3), dice que los niños tienen el derecho a experimentar serenidad. Ella dice: "Si los niños no aprenden a volcarse a sí mismos, pueden ser afectados negativamente por el estrés que no han sido capaces de liberar."

Aunque la mayoría está de acuerdo que la relajación es de gran beneficio, mucha gente no sabe que la relajación es una habilidad aprendida; la relajación debe ser alentada y practicada. Aún más, la relajación debe ser valorada por los adultos que son importantes en la vida de los niños. Si es así, es más probable que el niño se de un tiempo durante el día para estar tranquilo y "desconectarse."

Los beneficios de la relajación

Los investigadores se dan cuenta cada vez más de que existe una correlación entre el estrés y las enfermedades físicas y mentales. Esto significa que el niño que aprende a relajarse será lo suficientemente capaz como para manejar el estrés, y por lo tanto, tendrá una vida más sana (y también, más tranquila). El saber cuando y cómo relajarse también asegura una vida con mayor energía ya que el estrés quita energía. Las técnicas de relajación ayudan a "recargar las baterías."

En un nivel más básico, el saber relajarse ayuda a que el niño adquiera mayor control de su sistema motriz. Los niños que pueden relajarse voluntariamente tendrán en general, un mayor control sobre sus cuerpos. Esto significa que podrán iniciar y detener sus movimientos con facilidad, y podrán ejecutar movimientos lentos sostenidamente o movimientos rápidos. Un niño que se da el tiempo para relajarse, tendrá la oportunidad de experimentar la sensación de quietud total, dándole más significado y contraste a los movimientos del cuerpo. Aunque el niño decida participar o no en actividades deportivas, danza, u otra actividad física organizada, tal coordinación conlleva a un mayor equilibrio y auto-control, y a un sentimiento de comodidad con el propio cuerpo.

Si se utilizan imágenes mentales para fomentar la relajación, se aumenta la capacidad de imaginación del niño. En el mundo de hoy donde hay tantas imágenes ya elaboradas a las que el niño tiene acceso (en la televisión, computadores, videos, etc.), la capacidad de imaginación es cada vez menos necesaria. ¡Qué espantoso es pensar en un mundo futuro donde las personas no son capaces de ver más allá de las cosas que ya existen, de imaginarse las soluciones a sus problemas y retos, o ponerse en el lugar de otra persona y de sentir empatía.

Similarmente, si se utiliza la música para fomentar la relajación, el niño es expuesto al mundo de la calma y de la música pacífica, en contraste a lo que se escucha habitualmente en la radio y la televisión. Esto puede producir

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una mayor apreciación por la estética — lo que aumenta la conciencia y la sensibilidad del niño frente a la belleza.

Por último, la investigación del Dr. Edmund Jacobson, autoridad en el tema de la relajación, demuestra que controlar la tensión ayuda a que el niño aprenda las cosas de mejor manera. En todo caso, poder controlar la tensión ayuda a las personas de cualquier edad a hacer lo que deseen de mejor forma.

Rae Pica es especialista en motricidad y cree en la importancia de finalizar el día de clases con ejercicios de relajación. Es autora de la serie *Moving and Learning (Moviéndose y Aprendiendo)*, publicado por Human Kinetics (800/747-4457), y el texto recientemente publicado, *Experiences in Movement, (Experiencias con Movimiento)* publicado por Delmar (800/347/7707).

Sugerencias para los padres

Hay varias señales físicas que pueden advertirle si su preescolar está sufriendo estrés. Estas incluyen el hablar de forma excesiva y rápida, tensión muscular, actitudes beligerantes, apatía inusual o hiperactividad y lágrimas sin razón. Relajarse debiera ser parte de la rutina diaria tanto para los niños como para los adultos. Las técnicas de relajación son especialmente necesarias si el niño muestra cualquiera de estos síntomas de estrés.

Ambientación
Ya sea se trate de una rutina diaria o de una actividad necesaria debido a estrés, usted puede crear un ambiente de relajación bajando la intensidad de la luz, hablando en voz baja y delicadamente, y moviéndose tranquilamente. Si decide utilizar música para fomentar la tranquilidad, escoja temas que le sean conocidos y que le hayan parecido pacíficos y agradables. La mayoría de las veces estos son piezas instrumentales. Una gran cantidad de temas de relajación, especialmente para niños, incluyen canciones líricas destinadas a relajar. (Ver Library Resources, página 3.)

Estos temas, tengan o no letras, deben ser arreglos musicales simples, con pocos cambios en el ritmo y en el tempo. Si el propósito de la música es de crear un ambiente para que el niño realice ejercicios de relajación (ver más abajo), entonces mantenga el volumen bajo para que la música no sea el centro de la actividad. (Demasiada estimulación externa impedirá este propósito). Si la música es el foco, usted a veces puede alentar a que el niño se acueste, callado y con lo ojos cerrados. En otra ocasión puede sugerirle al niño que escuche algo específico, como un sonido o un instrumento en particular.

Usando Imágenes
Si decide usar ejemplos visuales para promover la relajación, asegúrese de que su hijo pueda relacionarse con ellos. Muéstrele una muñeca de trapo o un paño mojado, y háblele sobre la diferencia entre el fideo antes y después de cocinarse. Luego pídale que imite a uno de estos objetos.

También puede hacer que el niño recree la situación en su mente. Dígale que se acueste sobre el piso y que se imagine, por ejemplo, que están en la playa. Háblele suavemente sobre el calor y el sol, de la brisa fresca, y de los sonidos de las olas y de las gaviotas volando por encima.

Control de la respiración
El control de la respiración es una parte importante de la relajación. Cuando se inhala despacio y luego se exhala el doble de despacio, disminuimos la reserva de oxígeno y aumentamos la cantidad de dióxido de carbono en la sangre, lo que retarda la actividad nerviosa y cerebral. Para hacer que el niño respire profundamente dígale que se expanda (por medio de la inhalación) y se contraiga (exhalación) como un globo. Haga que se infle y desinfle de forma alternada (y lenta). Usted puede hacer que esta imagen sea más real haciendo una demostración con un globo.

Control de la tensión muscular
La habilidad para controlar la tensión muscular en forma voluntaria, también es importante en la relajación. Debido a que el preescolar no entenderá los términos "contraer" y "soltar," usted puede crear un juego que se base en las palabras "calmado" y "nervioso." Explíquele que el estar calmado es una sensación de mucha relajación - así como lo que el niño siente antes de quedarse dormido. También puede haber experimentado la misma sensación de calma cuando estaba sentado junto a un lago, observando un pájaro volando o mirando la puesta del sol. En esos momentos los músculos se sienten sueltos o "líquidos." Por otra parte, el estar nervioso es una combinación entre el miedo y la preocupación. El preescolar podría estar preocupado de que llueva justo antes de un paseo al aire libre, o al perder de vista a sus padres en un almacén y estar nervioso hasta que los encuentra denuevo. ¿Cómo sintió sus músculos en esos momentos? ¿Estaban relajados o tensos? Pídale al niño que se lo demuestre.

Una vez que el niño ha entendido la idea, explíquele que cuando usted dice la palabra "calmado," él deberá tratar de que su cuerpo esté lo más relajado posible. Cuando le dice "nervioso", el niño deberá apretarse. (Diga estas palabras a diferentes intervalos de tiempo y use un tono de voz que produzca la respuesta deseada.) Hágalo primero con el niño de pie. Luego repita el proceso con el niño hincado, sentado y finalmente acostado sobre el piso. "Derretirse" es un actividad estupenda para relajarse, además de ser muy entretenida. Háblele al niño sobre cómo se derriten los helados, las figuras de nieve y los cubos de hielo. Luego dígale que finja ser una de estas cosas y que muestre que tan lento o rápido él/ella se puede derretir.

No olvide de que la relajación también es importante para los adultos. No sólo estimule la relajación a su hijo. Cuando sea posible relájese con ellos.

Rae Pica

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 5 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *July 1995*

Should You Enroll Your Preschooler in "Extracurricular" Activities?

An outlandish scenario:
5:00 A.M. — Three-year-old Elizabeth is driven to the local ice rink for her figure skating lessons.
7:30 A.M. — Elizabeth is picked up at the ice rink and taken to her prestigious preschool which features rigorous classes in reading, writing, science, and math.
3:00 P.M. — Elizabeth is picked up from preschool and taken to her music teacher for her piano lessons.
4:30 P.M. — Elizabeth's parents sit with her at the family's personal computer and follow a special manual that will teach her how to run a variety of software systems.

During the preschool years, most parents want their children to become well-balanced, capable, caring people who are comfortable with themselves and others. By "capable" these parents simply mean "making the most of whatever potential they were born with."

Parents also want to expose their children to experiences in physical activities, the arts, and intellectual pursuits. This ordinarily does not include pre-professional skills in tennis and piano playing, genius capacities in reading and mathematics, or the acquisition of highly impressive vocabularies and overwhelming amounts of factual material. Although these kinds of accomplishments would be appreciated, parents usually do not set such lofty goals and have the strong desire to follow through.

However, some mothers and fathers do, indeed, desire extraordinarily high levels of achievement for their children as quickly as possible. And today, there are numerous programs for preschoolers that promise to produce impressively talented behavior in one or another or all aspects of development.

6:30 P.M. — Elizabeth and her parents sit down to dinner. They all are too exhausted to talk.
8:00 P.M. — Elizabeth is in bed, tossing and turning. Her parents are sitting at the kitchen table, looking at the balance in their checkbook and wondering where all the money has gone. They fall asleep before they can figure it out.

Questions for parents to consider

Do the people operating such programs really know dramatically better ways to deal with preschoolers, or are they merely exploiting the exaggerated hopes of anxious mothers and fathers? Will learning special skills at an unusually early age guarantee a child a lasting advantage over his peers, or will everyone else catch up soon enough? Should parents be supplying their little ones with extra stimulation right from the start, or will any benefits gained by such practices be outweighed by unhealthy side effects? (See Risks on next page.)

Opinions of psychologists and educators

Answers to these questions vary from one type of program to another, and even among individual programs of the same type. However, most psychologists and educators who have spent many years studying the development of young children do share the following opinions when it comes to "extracurricular" activities for preschoolers:

- There are, undeniably, some truly "gifted" children around. But no one is quite sure how they got to be that way. However, for most preschool children, *no one has demonstrated any method which has proven to be effective in bringing them up to the "genius" level —*

continued >>>>>

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intellectually, physically, or artistically. Researchers have been able to put together a fairly clear picture of how the mind grows during the preschool years, but they have not been able to determine how that growth can be significantly accelerated.

- Psychologists and educators are virtually unanimous in recommending that parents be very cautious and skeptical with regard to "intelligence institutes" that proudly proclaim they can take anyone's child and turn him into a little genius. Few of these institutes have permitted independent groups to observe and evaluate their procedures in order to verify the results being claimed.

- While there are several respectable programs which do have solid records of success in teaching preschoolers specific skills (such as reading and writing) a few years before they typically would learn them, *there is no such course of study which has proven to have lasting advantages for preschoolers without educational handicaps.* In other words, children who are developing well in general and did not participate in these special programs will be performing on a par with those who did participate by the time everybody enters the second or third grade.

- Most believe that *if benefits are achieved through procedures which involve intensive drills for long periods, the children's spontaneous interest and pleasure in learning are likely to be jeopardized.* During the preschool years, children learn to relate to other people, to use their bodies, and to employ their mental functions in a variety of ways — and that learning takes time. Preschoolers spend a large portion of their day just observing and exploring the world around them in a relaxed and unhurried fashion.

- Most children do not benefit in the long run from special programs. However, children with early educational handicaps which prevented them from learning certain fundamental skills may, indeed, be better off if they attend a high-quality compensatory program. Eliminating disadvantages during the preschool years does seem to produce enduring results.

Before enrolling your child...

If parent and child have certain passions, an extracurricular activity of some sort may be pleasurable and productive. However, if it is decided to involve a preschooler in a special early learning program, it is wise to make sure that the following factors have been considered carefully.

1) Goals. Will the child be learning something that is really valuable? Learning to swim, to play the violin, or any number of other activities can provide him with skills he may enjoy and value for the rest of his life. On the other hand, there are skills which may appear to be significant at first glance but may, in fact, turn out to be useless or superfluous as time goes by.

For example, there are several popular programs that teach three and four-year-olds how to use a personal computer. Given our high-tech society, this may seem like a good idea. However, with the rapid technological advances that are being made is it wise to devote a good portion of his day to mastering a machine which could be totally obsolete by the time he enters kindergarten? Might it not be far better for a preschooler to simply indulge his natural curiosity and develop his general learning skills?

2) Effectiveness. Can the program actually do what it says it can do? Just because the goals are admirable does not mean they are attainable. As indicated earlier, there are several programs with reliable records of success in teaching very young children a variety of skills. On the other hand, there are many more with miserable past performance charts. Consequently, it would be wise to ask any ambitious and/or expensive program for a list of parents whose children have previously participated and check those references thoroughly.

3) Risks. Is there anything about the procedures that might cause serious harm? It already has been mentioned that high-pressure, time-consuming, academically-oriented activities may be severely detrimental to a preschooler's well-balanced development. It also should be noted that some activities may be potentially hazardous from a medical standpoint. Therefore, it is a good idea to solicit input from a pediatrician before enrolling a preschooler in any program that may subject his body to unusual physical conditions.

For example, preschoolers can reap enormous benefits from many activities that promote physical fitness, from figure skating and dance to swimming and gymnastics. But it is important to keep in mind that their bones and joints are not nearly as strong as they will be in later years. Consequently, health professionals favor simple exercises with a strict concentration on recreation. They warn against programs that involve serious competition and aspirations toward high levels of proficiency as they may push young children to perform difficult jumps and twists that can produce inappropriate stress on still-tender body parts.

4) Atmosphere. Will the child truly like the program? The most successful offerings of this sort usually revolve around activities that capitalize upon the basic interests and abilities the preschoolers bring with them. Moreover, since Mom and Dad are the most important people in their lives, any activities which allow the children to share their excitement and achievements with their parents will have a greater likelihood of producing both enrichment and enjoyment.

For example, a sophisticated science program in which the instructor requires active and alert preschoolers to sit still for a prolonged slide show on the solar system defies the facts that children in this age range do not have long attention spans. They are constantly curious about everything, and they would much prefer to be doing something with their mothers and fathers. On the other hand, a parental participation program featuring a nature walk and a variety of "hands-on" experiments designed to feed into the children's strong desire to practice and perfect their emerging mental and motor skills probably will produce a lot more fulfillment and fun.

Most parents recognize that the preschool years constitute a critical period for learning. However, too many fail to realize just how rich, exciting, challenging, and "educational" the whole world is when it is being observed, explored, and interacted with for the very first time. And they often overlook the value of the many lessons that preschoolers learn through the thousands of ordinary experiences which constitute their day-to-day lives.

It is not surprising that Pablo Picasso, Maya Angelou, Albert Einstein, and Chris Evert, along with most other superachievers, did not begin to exhibit their particular talents until well after the preschool years. Instead of being urged to emulate the specific accomplishments of such notables right from the start, a child's preschool years probably will be a lot more productive and pleasurable if his parents simply encourage and help him to build a wide and firm foundation for whatever may come along in the future

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Dr. **Michael K. Meyerhoff**, a former researcher with the Harvard Preschool Project, is the executive director of The Epicenter Inc., "The Education for Parenthood Information Center," a family advisory and advocacy agency based in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Publications for Adults

Parent and preschooler Newsletter back issues: For information, contact Preschool Publications, 1-800-726 1708.

Science & Nature

- **3/87 Your child is a natural scientist**
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- **3/90 Gardening with your preschooler**
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Music & Movement

- **12/86 Creative movement**
- **4/87 Music... sounds like fun**
- **7/93 Creative Movement for Young Children**
- **8/94 Music to their Ears**

Exercise and Relaxation

- **8/88 Exercise and Fitness for preschoolers**
- **6/91 Active time/quiet time**
- **6/95 Making relaxation part of children's lives**

Art

- **6/87 Creative art**
- **11/92 Encouraging the artist in your preschooler**

Razzle Dazzle Doodle Art: *Creative Play for You and Your Young Child,* by Linda Allison and Martha Weston. Little, Brown, 1994. A book that is chock full of creative ideas to explore with young children. Many of the materials can be found around the house, and you don't have to be an artist to participate. Try projects in drawing, painting, cutting, pasting, and modeling with clay, and learn along the way how art helps in your child's development.

Drama and Music: *Creative Activities for Young Children,* by Janet Rubin and Margaret Merrion. Humanics Learning, PO Box 7400, Atlanta GA 30357, 1995. A sourcebook of ideas and activities for nurturing and expanding children's creative potential. It includes more than 100 games, stories and rhymes, plus activities with rhythm instruments, creative movement and drama.

Books for Children About Extracurricular Activities

D.W. Flips! by Marc Brown. Little, Brown, 1987. D.W. can't even do a forward roll in gymnastics class. But with persistence and much practice, she finally learns to do flips!

In the Woods: Who's Been Here? by Lindsay Barrett George. Greenwillow, 1995. As we follow two children along a woodland trail, we learn what bird or animal had been there before and left its trace behind. A beautifully illustrated journey of discovery.

Catch the Wind! All About Kites, by Gail Gibbons. Little, Brown, 1989. In this informative book, Katie and Sam go to Ike's Kite Shop and learn about the history of kites, how they are made, and how to fly them. They each buy a kite to fly in the kite festival. Includes instructions on how make your own kite.

What Instrument Is This? by Rosmarie Hausherr. Scholastic, 1992. Using black-and-white and color photographs, the author/illustrator identifies and discusses a variety of musical instruments. The book is written as a guessing game for young music lovers to enjoy.

Sewing by Hand, by Christine Hoffman. HarperCollins, 1994. Older preschoolers, working closely with an adult, might enjoy sewing a circle pillow, a beanbag cat, or a flower girl doll as described in this introduction to sewing.

Once Inside the Library, by Barbara A. Huff. Little, Brown, 1990. The wonder of the library is described in rhyme, with charming, old fashioned illustrations by Iris Van Rynbach. It tells of the adventures you can have through the magic that books can bring: visiting other lands, learning to sing, bake, or train a horse, or enjoying the fantasy of fairy tales.

The Sweet and Sour Animal Book, by Langston Hughes. Oxford University Press, 1994. This unique book includes 27 never-before-published poems about animals by Langston Hughes. The poems are perfect for young children, and the colorful, creative illustrations were made with paints and clay by students at the Harlem School of the Arts.

Wilson's World, by Edith Thacher Hurd & Clement Hurd. HarperTrophy, 1971. "Wilson liked to paint pictures, and sometimes he wrote stories to go with them." Wilson paints the world, the sea, and the sky. Soon little green things begin to pop up everywhere: trees, grass, and flowers. Animals appear and people too. But when his world becomes full of pollution, Wilson paints another picture of the world he really wants.

Skeeter and the Computer, by Frank Modell. Greenwillow, 1988. Skeeter is a dog who hates to be left alone. So when the family goes away for the day, he befriends the computer. The computer teaches Skeeter new tricks, and when the family is about to return, Skeeter learns the best trick of all.

Regina's Big Mistake, by Marissa Moss. Houghton Mifflin, 1990. Regina and all the other children in class are supposed to draw a jungle or a rain forest on the big blank piece of paper in front of each of them. The others don't seem to have any trouble drawing trees, and lions, and birds, but when Regina begins, she is afraid she has made a mistake, and she crumples up her paper. She tries again and finally creates a beautiful picture that is all her own.

The Dancing Class, by Helen Oxenbury. Puffin Pied Piper, 1993. With gentle humor, using just a few words and soft, cheerful illustrations, the famous author/illustrator tells about one little girl's first experience at a ballet class.

Music Lessons, by Harriet Ziefert. HarperCollins, 1992. Carrying their violins, the children go to their lesson and make beautiful music, despite minor setbacks. (A Stickerbook Reader.)

Bibliography by
Betty Farber

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Should parents of preschoolers be concerned about the amount of sugar in their children's diet?

- *After having cake, ice cream and candy at a birthday party, Megan runs around in circles; Justin jumps up and down; Amanda screams with delight. Is the "hyper" activity of these preschoolers caused by the sugar they just ate?*

- *During free-play time at the preschool, Tim and Adam pretend they are karate experts and assume the sparing position with their hands and legs. The preschool teacher intervenes and directs them to the block corner. Will she caution each boy's parents about not feeding him a sugary breakfast?*

What about sugar? This question comes from a parent who wants to feed her children healthy foods. Does it cause hyperactivity? Should parents of preschoolers be concerned about the amount of sugar in their children's diet?

Recent research has examined the effects of sugar on preschool and school age children. One report was published in the highly respected *New England Journal of Medicine*[1] in February of 1994. The subjects included 25 preschool children (3 to 5 years of age) and 23 school-age children (6 to 10 years) whose parents believed they were affected by sugar. The study was described as "carefully controlled." In each home all the food was removed and only food supplied by the researchers was used. No foods contained additives, food coloring, or preservatives. The study concluded that sugar does not affect a child's behavior or cognitive function (ability to think).

Why do children act the way they do at a birthday party? It could be excitement from the party itself: looking forward to going, dressing a certain way, bringing a present, and playing in a social setting. It could be because food and drinks (sodas, chocolate, etc.) may contain caffeine, and/or additives, such as artificial food coloring, which can stimulate a child and cause nervousness and insomnia.

The myth that sugar causes hyperactivity is perpetuated by many parents and teachers. In *Psychological Reports*[2], 389 teachers of preschool-age to eighth grade children responded to questionnaires linking sugar to hyperactivity. Eighty percent of the teachers "believed that sugar consumption contributes to increased activity of normal children and to the behavioral problems of hyperactive children." A hyperactive child is defined as one who is diagnosed as having "a high level of motor activity and short attention span."

Fifty-five percent of these teachers counseled parents of hyperactive children to reduce sugar consumption. One danger in this counseling for hyperactive children, the report states, is that parents might not get necessary treatment. "The implementation of an effortful and inappropriate treatment strategy (reducing or eliminating sugar) may hinder the treatment process by distracting parents from more effective treatments."

While the research concludes that sugar does not cause hyperactivity, there are definite disadvantages when sugar is consumed excessively. It is high in calories, contributing to obesity, and can cause tooth decay.

A danger for preschoolers in eating many calories in sugar is that they won't be getting the protein, complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins and minerals that they need. Any food made with sugar should be a treat and eaten in moderation. *The Parents' Guide to Feeding Your Kids Right*[3] states, "since few children are free from craving for sweets, eliminating them from a child's diet is an unnecessary deprivation. Like every other part of a child's diet, it should be viewed in perspective."

What is sugar and how is it used by the body? There are four common types of sugar: sucrose (table sugar), fructose (fruit sugar), glucose (blood sugar), lactose (milk sugar). Whatever type of sugar we ingest, our body breaks it down into glucose which is used for energy or stored as fat.

Sugar is not the only contributor to obesity, which is related more to high fat foods. Many baked goods and desserts, such as cookies, cakes, pastries, and ice cream are high in fat and also high in sugar.

Higher amounts of sugar are available to Americans through ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, sweetened drinks, and candy. The average person in the USA consumes 125 pounds of sugar per year.

Resources:

[1] Mark L. Wolraich, M.D. et al, The New England Journal of Medicine. February 3, 1994. Vol. 330, No. 5, Page 301.

[2] David DiBattista and Mari-Lynn Shepherd, Psychological Reports, 1993, Vol. 72, No. 1, Page 47.

[3] Kathy Maloney, Children's Television Workshop, Parents' Guide to Feeding Your Kids Right: Birth Through Teen Years, Prentice Hall, 1989.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de julio, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 5) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Debiera Inscribir a Su Preescolar en Actividades "Extracurriculares"?

Un ejemplo exagerado:
5:00 A.M. — A Elizabeth, de tres años de edad, la llevan a la pista local de hielo para sus lecciones de patinaje artístico.
7:30 A.M. — La van a recoger a la pista de hielo y le llevan a una prestigiosa escuela preescolar que imparte rigurosas clases de lectura, escritura, ciencias y matemáticas.
3:00 P.M. — Los padres van a recoger a Elizabeth a la escuela y la llevan donde una profesora de música para tomar lecciones de piano.
4:30 P.M. — Los padres de Elizabeth se sientan con ella al lado de la computadora y siguen un manual especial para enseñarle a manejar un conjunto de programas de computación.

Durante la niñez preescolar, la mayoría de los padres desean que sus hijos se conviertan en personas bien equilibradas, capacitadas y afectuosas, que se sientan bien consigo mismas y con otros. Cuando los padres hablan de niños "capacitados" se refieren sencillamente a "aprovechar al máximo cualquier potencial con el que hayan nacido."

Los padres también quieren exponer a sus hijos a participar en actividades físicas, artes y pasatiempos intelectuales. Por lo general, esto no incluye habilidades pre-profesionales para jugar tenis y tocar el piano, capacidades prodigiosas para la lectura o las matemáticas, o la adquisición de un impresionante vocabulario y sorprendentes cantidades de datos. Aunque este tipo de logros serán bien recibidos, en general los padres no fijan metas tan elevadas, pero puede que tengan un fuerte deseo por llevarlas a cabo.

Sin embargo, algunos padres sí aspiran a que sus hijos alcancen un gran número de logros lo antes posible. Hoy en día existen numerosos programas para preescolares que prometen producir comportamiento talentoso en algunos, o en todos los aspectos del desarrollo.

6:30 PM — Elizabeth y sus padres se sientan a cenar. Todos están demasiado cansados como para conversar.
8:00 PM — Elizabeth ya está acostada y dándose vueltas en la cama. Sus padres, sentados en la cocina, miran el estado de cuenta de su chequera y se preguntan a donde se ha ido todo el dinero. Se van a dormir antes de poder determinarlo.

Preguntas que los padres deben tener en cuenta

Las personas que ofrecen dichos programas, ¿conocen en realidad métodos mucho mejores para tratar a los preescolares, o simplemente explotan los deseos exagerados de los padres? El aprender destrezas especiales a una edad extremadamente temprana le garantizará al niño una ventaja duradera sobre los niños de su misma edad, o todos los demás niños lo alcanzarán pronto en sus logros? ¿Debieran los padres otorgar una motivación adicional desde el comienzo de la vida los niños? Y si es así, ¿podrán los efectos secundarios negativos superar los beneficios obtenidos de tales prácticas? (Ver Riesgos en la página siguiente.)

Opiniones de psicólogos y educadores

Las respuestas a estas dudas varían de un programa a otro, y aun entre programas personalizados de un mismo tipo. Sin embargo, la mayoría de los psicólogos y educadores — que han estudiado por años el desarrollo de los preescolares — tienen algunas opiniones en común cuando se trata de actividades "extracurriculares" para preescolares:

- Sin duda, existen algunos niños "dotados." Pero nadie está bien seguro de cómo esto sucede. Sin embargo, para la mayoría de los preescolares, *todavía no se ha demostrado ningun método comprobado que puedan convertir a los niños en "genios" — desde el punto de vista intelectual, físico o artístico.* Los investigadores han podido elaborar un cuadro bastante claro de cómo se desarrolla la mente durante los años preescolares, pero no han podido determinar cómo se puede acelerar de manera significativa ese desarrollo.

- Los psicólogos y educadores concuerdan casi unánimemente al recomendar a los padres ser muy cautelosos y escépticos sobre los llamados "institutos de inteligencia", los que con orgullo proclaman poder convertir a un niño normal en un pequeño genio. Sin embargo, son pocas las instituciones de este tipo que han permitido la observación y evaluación de sus procedimientos para verificar los resultados que dicen lograr.

- A pesar de que existen varios programas respetables que sí tienen registros serios de buenos resultados en la enseñanza de destrezas específicas (como leer y escribir) unos años antes de lo normal, *no existe ningun programa que haya enseñado ventajas duraderas a los*

continuará >>>>>>

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preescolares que presentan un desarrollo normal. Esto significa que los niños que se desarrollan normalmente y que no participan en programas especiales alcanzarán al mismo nivel de aquellos que sí participaron en dichos programas cuando lleguen al primer o segundo grado de instrucción básica.

- La mayoría cree que *si se obtienen beneficios por medio de procedimientos que involucran ejercicios de repetición intensivos durante largos períodos, es probable que se ponga en peligro el interés espontáneo y el gusto por aprender que tienen los niños.* Durante los años preescolares, los niños aprenden a interactuar con otras personas, a utilizar el cuerpo y a realizar funciones mentales de diversas formas — y ese aprendizaje toma tiempo. Los niños preescolares pasan gran parte del día observando y explorando el mundo a su alrededor con tranquilidad y sin apresuramiento.

- Al largo plazo la mayoría de los niños no se beneficia de los programas especiales. Sin embargo, los niños con desventajadas en el aprendizaje que no pudieron aprender determinadas destrezas, pueden verse beneficiados si toman un programa compensatorio de alta calidad. La eliminación de estas desventajas durante los años preescolares parecen lograr resultados duraderos.

Antes de inscribir a su hijo...

Si padre e hijo se apasionan por alguna actividad extracurricular, esto podría ser una experiencia placentera y productiva. Sin embargo, si se decide involucrar a un preescolar en un programa de aprendizaje prematuro, es recomendable considerar los siguientes factores cuidadosamente.

1) Metas. ¿Aprenderá el niño algo realmente valioso? Aprender a nadar, tocar el violín o cualquier otro tipo de actividad podría desarrollar destrezas para el resto de su vida. Por otro lado, hay habilidades que parecen importantes, pero de hecho, podrían resultar inútiles o supérfluas con el paso del tiempo.

Por ejemplo, existen varios programas que enseñan a niños de tres y cuatro años de edad, a usar una computadora personal. Esto puede parecer una buena idea dado que vivimos en una sociedad altamente tecnologizada. Sin embargo, con la rapidez que avanza la tecnología, ¿sería útil dedicar una buena parte del día a aprender a usar un aparato que estará obsoleto para cuando el preescolar entre al kindergarten? ¿No sería mucho mejor que el preescolar sencillamente se abocara a descubrir su curiosidad natural y desarrollar habilidades generales?

2) Eficacia. ¿Puede programa lograr los resultados que ofrece? El hecho de que las metas provoquen admiración no quiere decir que se pueden alcanzar. Como se señaló anteriormente, existen varios programas confiables con buenos antecedentes en la enseñanza de destrezas a niños pequeños. Pero también existen muchos otros con pésimas estadísticas en sus resultados. Por lo tanto, es útil solicitar a las personas que ofrecen programas ambiciosos y/o costosos, una lista de padres cuyos hijos hayan participado en dichos programas, y revisar cuidadosamente la información entregada.

3) Riesgos. ¿Existen posibilidades de que los métodos que se usan puedan causar daños graves? Se mencionó con anterioridad que las actividades académicas de alta presión que ocupan mucho tiempo pueden perjudicar el desarrollo normal del preescolar. También se debe tomar en cuenta que algunas actividades pueden ser potencialmente peligrosas desde un punto de vista médico. Por lo tanto, es recomendable solicitar la opinión de un pediatra antes de inscribir al preescolar en algún programa que lo someta a ejercicios que no está acostumbrado.

Por ejemplo, los preescolares pueden sacar grandes beneficios de muchas actividades que promueven el estado físico, desde patinaje artístico, baile, natación o gimnasia. Pero es importante tener en mente que los huesos y articulaciones del niño todavía no son lo suficientemente fuertes. Por esta razón, los profesionales de la salud prefieren ejercicios sencillos con énfasis en la recreación. Los médicos advierten sobre los programas que involucran la competencia y que buscan un alto rendimiento físico. Esto podría obligar a los niños a ejecutar saltos y volteretas que podrían dañar las partes más delicadas del cuerpo del pequeño.

4) Medio Ambiente. ¿A su preescolar le gustará el programa? Los programas de mayor éxito se basan en actividades que refuerzan los intereses y habilidades básicas que los niños ya han desarrollado. Más aun, ya que los padres son las personas más importantes en la vida de los niños, cualquier actividad que les permita compartir su entusiasmo y logros con ellos tendrá mayores posibilidades de aportar enriquecimiento y alegría.

Por ejemplo, un programa complicado sobre ciencias en que el profesor necesita que los preescolares que son alertas y activos, se sienten quietos durante la exhibición de diapositivas sobre el sistema solar, entra en conflicto con el hecho de que los niños en esta edad no han desarrollado períodos prolongados de atención. Los preescolares tienen curiosidad por todo y preferirían hacer algo con sus padres. Por otro lado, es muy probable que un programa con participación de los padres, tal como caminatas al aire libre y juegos de participación activa creados para satisfacer el deseo infantil de practicar y perfeccionar sus nacientes habilidades mentales y motoras, produzca una gran satisfacción y diversión.

La mayoría de los padres reconocen que los años preescolares son un período crítico para el aprendizaje. Sin embargo, muchos no se dan cuenta de lo enriquecedor, deleitoso, y "educacional" que es el mundo cuando se interactua, observa y explora por primera vez. A menudo los padres no perciben el valor de las cosas que los preescolares aprenden en las miles de experiencias que enfrentan en la vida cotidiana.

Por ello, no resultaso prendente que Pablo Picasso, Maya Angelou, Albert Einstein y Chris Evert, al igual que la mayoría de las personas destacadas, no hayan exhibido sus talentos particulares con bastante posterioridad a los años preescolares. En vez de presionarlos para que imiten tales logros desde el principio, los años preescolares pueden resultar mucho más productivos y placenteros si los padres sencillamente motivan y ayudan a sus hijos a construir una amplia y sólida base para lo que se presente en el futuro.

El Dr. Michael K. Meyerhoff, ex investigador del Proyecto Preescolar de Harvard, es director ejecutivo de The Epicenter Inc., "The Education for Parenthood Information Center," agencia de consejería y defensa de la familia, con sede en Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *August 1995*

The Gingerbread Man ran & ran...
That sounds like a giant snoring.
AND THREE!

Helping your child to be a successful learner

Before bedtime Jake's mother reads him the story of *The Gingerbread Man.* Jake concentrates on the pictures in the book to help him remember how to retell the story to his mother. Jake might be thought of as a *visual learner.*

Maeve and her mother listen to instrumental music on the car radio. "That sounds like a giant snoring," and, "I hear a piano playing in this song," are just some of Maeve's comments as she listens. Maeve might be thought of as an *auditory learner.*

Linsey is learning to count. When she and her father count her stuffed animals, she touches each one on the head as she counts. Linsey might be thought of as a *kinesthetic learner.*

"Visual learner," "auditory learner," and "kinesthetic learner" are just three of today's buzz words that describe how an individual child learns best.

A visual learner uses his *sight* to comprehend and store knowledge. An auditory learner gains information through *listening*. A kinesthetic learner must *touch* or *feel* as a way of gathering knowledge.

By observing the activities your child enjoys you can determine which type of learning is most *dominant* in your child. For instance, a preschooler who can work a challenging multi-piece puzzle without frustration might be described as a "visual learner."

But what happens if a visual learner wants to play the piano which requires listening skills? Or what if an auditory learner wants to type on the computer which requires a sense of touch? Children use all three types of learning in varying degrees. For example, a child must use the sense of touch, sight and hearing to acquire just the basic writing and reading skills.

Children can learn through all the senses

As parents you can help your preschoolers become "well-rounded" so they can meet their future learning experiences with success. The skills they will need for academic achievement are developed during the preschool years.

Throughout the day your child is surrounded by sounds, smells, sights, and textures but these experiences alone are not enough. He must also have simple information to help his mind *organize* what he receives through his senses. This information allows him to compare differences, similarities, and degrees. It helps him become aware of and appreciate the world around him. Dr. Maria Montessori, who developed the Montessori method of teaching, called this "education of the senses."

Learning through everyday routines

Your daily routines provide the perfect opportunity to help your child discover and develop all of his senses. For example:

continued >>>>>

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PS 024419

Sight:

Young preschoolers can easily distinguish between things that are very different. For example, with a young preschooler you can name the primary colors (red, blue, yellow) on his toys.

When your child can identify primary colors, he may be ready to learn about more subtle differences. Talk about the shades (orange, pink, purple) of color in his clothing, your home, or signs you see on the street.

Touch

Your child's sense of touch or "kinesthetic sense" is just as important as his sight and hearing. When we repeatedly handle an object, such as a wooden block, the information about the size, weight, dimension and texture that we receive through our sense of touch is stored in our muscles. This is called "muscular memory." It's what you use when you dial a friend's phone number or write the letters of the alphabet. This is the reason why feeling the shape of letters helps children remember more easily than merely looking at flash cards.

A few of the areas where your child will eventually use his sense of touch are in physical education, typing, band, team or individual sports, penmanship or art.

Hearing

Your preschooler will rely on his sense of hearing as he begins to learn the sounds of the written letters in the alphabet. Music is one way to strengthen the sense of hearing. While listening to music in your car, point out a few qualities that are very different. It could be different instruments, the type of music, the tempo, or the concept of loud and soft. Use the fewest words as possible such as "That's a saxophone." "Isn't that music loud?" Try a different radio station every week so your child can compare the styles and tempos for himself.

It is often said that parents are the child's first teachers. In every family routine or tradition there is an opportunity to learn. A well-rounded learner has a firm foundation for life-long success.

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Activities for you and your preschooler

Sense of Hearing

Activities that develop your child's sense of hearing prepare her to distinguish the small differences in the similar sounds of our alphabet such as p and b, s and z, m and n. This skill is needed for writing words and reading.

- Begin a tape collection for your child. Most variety stores carry inexpensive tapes. Choose some music with solo instruments to help your child become acquainted with the sound of specific instruments. Share simple information about the composer, for instance, Mozart wrote music when he was five — a preschooler! An easy-to-use tape player will help your child gain independence as she selects music and masters the controls on her own.

- Learn a new language. Children, six and under, have the ability to easily learn a foreign language. Some foreign language tapes are produced specifically for children (see Library Resources, page 3). You can also check out foreign language books for beginners at your library. Begin with a few words each week and progress according to your child's interest.

- Find the bell. This is the perfect game to play before bedtime because your child must quietly concentrate and move cautiously. To play, slip a blindfold (a wide terry cloth head band works well) over your child's eyes. Ring a bell or wind-up a music box across the room. Ask your child to move towards the sound until she finds it. The blindfold will isolate your child's hearing so she must rely only on this sense to find the sound.

- Tell a story without pictures. In our extremely visual society, children often have limited opportunities to create their own mental images. Help your child visualize the stories she hears or reads by asking her to close her eyes while you read. Encourage her to create pictures for the story in her mind.

Sense of Taste

- Name that taste. During dinner, take turns naming the taste of foods on your plate. Give your preschooler the opportunity to experience all four tastes — sweet, sour, bitter, and salty.

- Experiment with taste. Set out a few taste experiments so your child can discover how foods similar in appearance can taste very different. Compare water and vinegar, salt and sugar, bitter and sweet chocolate.

Sense of Touch

- Before and after. Compare and describe the textures of these foods before and after cooking: pasta, beans, bread dough, gelatin, pudding, potatoes, cookie dough, carrots and popcorn.

- Match textures. Before you toss out worn clothing, cut 2 squares from the fabric. Remove all of the buttons for the activity below. Collect a variety of textures like felt, satin, cotton and flannel. Blindfolded, your child can find the matching pairs by feeling the fabric with her fingertips.

- Match sizes. For this activity, you will need about 3 sets of 2 matching buttons. Each set should vary greatly in size or shape. Put the buttons in a bag. Ask your child to put her hand inside the bag and pull out one button that feels the same. Add more sets, once your child has mastered the first three. *(Caution: Buttons are a choking hazard. Use with older preschoolers.)*

- A feather's touch. Some items your child will want to feel or handle require a delicate touch. To demonstrate this "feather touch" stroke your child's arm or hand with a feather. Talk about how light and gently the feather touches her arm. Delicate sea shells, a pet hamster and holiday ornaments all require a feather's touch.

- Discovering weights. Ask your child to hold her hands palms up with elbows off the table. Place one can of fruit, vegetable or other canned items in each hand. Instruct, "Put the heaviest (or) lightest one down first." Try cans or boxes of food that are equal in size but drastically different in weight.

Sense of Sight

- "Can you find...?" Turn refrigerator magnets into a learning game. Ask questions like, "Can you find the magnet with the letter ' m'?" Or, "Can you find two square magnets and three circle magnets?" This game will help your child look carefully for specific details. Try magazines for a different version of this game. Tell your child, "Somewhere in this magazine, there's a picture of a (little boy brushing his teeth, a rabbit or other known item), can you find it?"

- Grading sizes. Spread out a set of stackable measuring cups on the table. Ask your child to stack them together. Try measuring spoons once she has mastered the cups. In this type of game, your child's eyes must discern the difference in size.

- Matching game. On a table, spread plastic containers and matching lids in a variety of sizes. Ask your child to match the lids to the containers. For a young preschooler, use just three containers in extremely different sizes. For older preschoolers, try four or more containers in similar sizes.

(These activities were developed in Montessori classrooms and have been redesigned for parents and their children.)

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Concept Books for Children

Counting Books

Let's Count Baby, by Cheryl Willis Hudson. Scholastic Cartwheel, 1995. In a book with heavy cardboard pages for the youngest preschoolers, a little African-American girl counts everyday objects from one to ten.

***Ten Cats Have Hats:** A Counting Book,* by Jean Marzollo. Scholastic Cartwheel, 1994. Wearing a different hat on every page, a child counts animals from one to ten in this humorous book.

Fun with Numbers, by Eileen McCarney-Muldoon and Mary Bennett O'Brien. Aladdin Books edition, 1992. A guessing game for toddlers, illustrated with photos of babies and objects to count such as toy cars, socks, and teddy bears.

Counting Wildflowers, by Bruce McMillan. Mulberry Books edition, 1995. The sparkling color photographs help children learn about wildflowers as they count from 1 to 20 and even beyond!

The Counting Zoo, by Lynette Ruschak. Aladdin Books, 1992. The numbers pop right off the pages as you count the amusing stuffed animals in this pop-up number book.

How Much Is A Million? by David M. Schwartz. Mulberry edition, 1993. Older preschoolers may be ready to think way beyond ten or twenty, and try to conceptualize what one million means, or even a billion or a trillion. This book can help!

Colors

Colors Everywhere, by Tana Hoban. Greenwillow, 1995. This wordless book is by an internationally known photographer and children's book author. The brilliant colors that appear in the photographs on each page are shown again in blocks of color beside each picture, heightening our awareness of the colors everywhere.

Fun with Colors, by Eileen McCarney-Muldoon and Mary Bennett O'Brien. Aladdin Books edition, 1992. As with the book, ***Fun with Numbers,*** (see above), toddlers will delight in the photos of babies that illustrate a variety of colors.

***Color:** a poem by Christina Rossetti,* pictures by Mary Teichman. HarperTrophy, 1992. Adults and young children will enjoy the lovely illustrations and the beauty of the language of this poem, first published in 1871.

Blue Hat Red Coat, by Clara Vulliamy. Candlewick Press, 1994. Baby takes off different colored clothes one by one. Cardboard pages make this book ideal for the youngest preschoolers.

ABC Books

It Begins with an A, by Stephanie Calmenson. Hyperion, 1994. Preschoolers will enjoy the riddles in this alphabet guessing game in rhyme, with cheerful illustrations by Marisabina Russo.

Maisy's ABC, by Lucy Cousins. Candlewick Press, 1995. With tabs to pull and flaps to lift, toddlers will have great fun as they learn about the ABC's.

Robert Crowther's Incredible Animal Alphabet. Candlewick Press, 1994. In this lift-the-flap book, names of large animals are in large type, while small animals' names appear in small type. Lift the flaps and see illustrations of the animals. Pull the tabs and you may encounter some surprises.

ABCDrive! by Naomi Howland. Clarion Books, 1994. An auto trip provides the opportunity to identify sights using every letter of the alphabet.

***Goodnight to Annie:** An Alphabet Lullaby,* by Eve Merriam. Hyperion, 1994. All creatures from A to Z go to sleep as nighttime falls in this restful ABC book.

Other Concepts

The Shape of Things, by Dayle Ann Dodds. Candlewick Press, 1994. With simple rhymes and colorful illustrations, this book can help children identify shapes in the world around them.

Animal Sounds for Baby, by Cheryl Willis Hudson. Scholastic Cartwheel, 1995. In a book with heavy cardboard pages for the youngest preschoolers, a little African-American boy listens to the sounds of familiar animals.

Left or Right? by Karl Rehm and Kay Koike. Clarion, 1991. "The concept of left or right can be tricky for young children to master." By using much repetition, and clear color photographs, the authors help to clarify this difficult concept.

Can You Guess? by Margaret Miller. Greenwillow, 1993. "What do you comb in the morning?" There are several silly suggestions along with a full page photograph to illustrate the correct answer. A book to reinforce logical thinking, while giving the reader many moments of fun.

I Can Tell by Touching, by Carolyn Otto. HarperTrophy, 1994. This Let's-Read-And-Find-Out-Science® book tells how we can use our hands, feet, or our whole body to discover information using the sense of touch.

Audiocassettes

Songs and Activities for Early Learners, by Sara Jordan. Jordan Music Productions Inc., 1993 (1-800-567-7733). Lively songs and activities for preschoolers, dealing with the alphabet, counting, parts of the body, shapes, etc. are included in an audiocassette and guide book. Also available in Spanish, ***Canciones Y Juegos Español para Principiantes Pequeños Y Grandes.*** 1994 Award Winner Early Childhood News Directors' Choice Awards.

Teach Me Tapes, Inc. (1-800-456-4646) produces cassette tapes with booklets.

Lyric Language (1-800-748-5804) produces video and cassette tapes.

Bibliography by
BettyFarber
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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Fingerplays

A finger play is a poem which is acted out, mostly with the hands. Preschoolers can say the words and do the actions along with you. Following the actions helps preschoolers remember the words. Say and do the fingerplay at least once before asking preschoolers to do it with you. Or say each line and have them repeat after you.

Try these sensory fingerplays with your preschooler. You might want to act these out right before snack time because you might get hungry!

Note: all finger plays printed here can be sung to the popular French tune "Frère Jacques." The actions are in parenthesis.

Baking Bread

Smell the wheat bread
(point nose upward, sniff air)
While it's baking
Breathe it in...
(breathe deeply)
With your nose
(point to nose)
What a great aroma
(sigh)
You can almost taste it!
Yum, yum yum
(rub tummy)
Almost done.
(point to watch or clock)

Popping Corn

Hear the popcorn
(hand by ear)
Noisy popcorn
(hands over ears)
Pop*pop*pop*
(clap, clap, clap)
Little popcorn kernels
(pointer and thumb together)
Open when you heat them
(open hand)
Popping's stopped
(hand by ear)
Now we eat!
(hand to mouth)

Apple Twins

See red apples
(hand above eyes)
See green apples
(point)
In the tree
Just for me
(point to self)
Munchy, crunchy apples
(pretend to pick apples off tree)
Crispy, juicy apples
(put in basket)
What a treat!
Apples to eat!
(rub tummy)

Quick Bread

Mixing, stirring
(make a fist, as if holding spoon)
Mixing, stirring
(pretend to stir)
Round and round
(continue stirring)
Round and round
Gather up the bread dough
(hand and fingers open, pushing air together)
Shape it in a circle
(hands open, fingers together)
Bake it quick
(place in 'oven', palms upward)
Cool and eat!
(hand to mouth)

Spice is Nice

Taste the cinnamon
(lick lips)
On your wheat toast
(hand flat, palm up)
Use your tongue
(point to tongue)
Chew it up
(hand to mouth)
Whole wheat toast
and cinnamon
What a lovely breakfast
(clasp hands)
Spicy taste, on your tongue.
(smack lips)

Bread Textures

Touch the bread dough
(pointer)
Rising bigger
(hands open, move outward)
Smooth, soft dough
(palm down, move back and forth)
Punch it down!
(Punch air, downward motion)
Shape to fit the loaf pan
(shape, fingers together)
Bake it in the oven
(place in 'oven', palms upward)
Cool, slice, eat
(sawing action with hand)
Homemade treat!
(rub tummy)

Whistle

Whistling kettle
(hand to ear)
Boiling Water
DO NOT TOUCH!
(fold hands)
KEEP AWAY!
(hands behind back)
Hear the whistling kettle
(hand to ear)
Like a joyful song bird
Use your ears
(point to ears)
You can hear
(point to child)

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
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US$12 for 1 year
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Pp
Parent
and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de agosto, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 6) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Ayudando a que su hijo aprenda de manera eficaz

Antes de que Jake se duerma, su madre lee el cuento del *Hombre de Jenjibre (Gingerbread Man).* Jake se concentra en los dibujos del libro para que le ayuden a recordar la historia y poder contársela a su madre. Jake podría considerarse como un niño de *aprendizaje visual.*

Maeve y su madre escuchan música instrumental por la radio del carro. "Eso suena como un gigante roncando," y, "Escucho a un piano en esta pieza," son sólo algunos de los comentarios que hace Maeve cuando escucha. Maeve podría considerarse como una niña de *aprendizaje auditivo.*

Linsey está aprendiendo a contar. Cuando ella y el padre cuentan sus animales de peluche, los toca en la cabeza mientras cuenta. Linsey podría considerarse como una niña de *aprendizaje cinestético.*

El "aprendizaje visual", el "aprendizaje auditivo" y el "aprendizaje cinestético" son tres términos utilizados para describir como mejor aprenden los niños.

El niño de "aprendizaje visual" utiliza *la vista* para comprender y almacenar conocimiento. Por otra parte, el de "aprendizaje auditivo" obtiene la información *escuchando.* El de "aprendizaje cinestético" tiene que *tocar y sentir* para poder acumular conocimiento.

Observando las actividades que su niño disfruta, usted puede determinar que tipo de aprendizaje es el más dominante en el niño. Por ejemplo, el preescolar que puede armar un puzzle de varias piezas sin frustrarse, podría describirse como un niño de "aprendizaje visual".

¿Pero qué pasa si el niño de "aprendizaje visual" quiere tocar el piano, para el que se necesita tener habilidades auditivas?. ¿ O qué pasa si un niño de "aprendizaje auditivo" quiere escribir en un computador, lo que requiere de un sentido de tacto? Los niños utilizan los tres tipos de aprendizaje en diferentes grados. Por ejemplo, el niño debe usar los sentidos del tacto, vista y audición para adquirir las habilidades necesarias en la lectura y la escritura.

Los niños pueden aprender por medio de todos estos sentidos

Como padre usted puede ayudar a que su niño sea lo suficientemente bien pulido o educado para que enfrente sus futuras experiencias de aprendizaje con éxito. Las habilidades que necesita durante los años académicos se desarrollan durante la preescuela.

Durante todo el día el niño está rodeado de ruídos, olores, vistas lugares de interés y texturas, pero estas experiencias aisladas no son suficiente. También debe tener información simple para ayudar a que su mente organize lo que él recibe por medio de los sentidos. Esta información le permite comparar diferencias, similitudes y grados. Le ayuda a tomar conciencia y a apreciar el mundo que lo rodea. La Dra. María Montessori, que desarrolló el método de enseñanza Montessori llamó a ésto la "educación de los sentidos."

Aprendiendo por medio de las rutinas diarias

Sus rutinas diarias son la oportunidad perfecta para ayudar a que los niño descubra y desarrolle todos sus sentidos. Por ejemplo:

La Vista:
El preescolar puede distinguir fácilmente entre las cosas que son muy diferentes. Por ejemplo, junto con él pueden señalarse los colores primarios (rojo, azul, amarillo) de sus juguetes. Cuando pueda identificar los colores primarios y los colores básicos, podrá estar listo para aprender sobre las diferencias más sutiles. Hable sobre los tonos (anaranjado, rosa, púrpura) de su ropa, de su casa o de los que tienen las señales de la calle.

El Tacto:
El sentido del tacto o el "sentido cinestético" es igual de importante que el ver y el escuchar. Cuando se manipula un objeto repetidamente, como un bloque de madera, la información acercar del tamaño, peso, dimensión y textura que recibimos por medio del sentido del tacto, se almacena en los músculos. Esto se llama "memoria muscular". Es lo se usa cuando se marca el número de teléfonos de un amigo o al escribir las letra del alfabeto. Por esta razón el tocar y sentir la forma de las letras ayuda a que el niño las recuerde más que si las vieras en tarjetas de aprendizaje de memoria.

Algunos de los ámbitos en que el niño eventualmente utilizará su sentido del tacto son, en la educación física, al escribir a máquina, en deportes de equipos o individuales, en la caligrafía o en el arte.

continuará >>>>>>

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El Oído:
El preescolar se apoyará en el sentido auditivo a medida que aprenda los sonidos de las letras del alfabeto. La música es una forma de reforzar el sentido auditivo. Mientras escucha música en el carro, indíquele al niño algunas características de ésta que sean muy diferentes. Podría ser los diferentes instrumentos, el tipo de música, los tiempos o el concepto de alto y bajo. Utilize la menor cantidad de palabras posibles tales como "Ese es un saxo". "¿Está muy alta la música?" Haga la prueba con una estación de radio diferente cada semana para que el niño compare estilos y tiempos por él mismo.

Muy a menudo se dice que los padres son los primeros profesores del niño. En cada rutina o costumbre familiar hay una oportunidad para aprender. Un niño bien pulido tiene las bases los suficientemente firmes como para llevar una vida de éxito.

La autora Diana Stanley, ex profesora de Kindergarten, es editora/escritora de Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; ella dicta el curso titulado Escribiendo Artículos de Revista (Writing the Magazine Article) en Rose State College.

Actividades

para usted y su preescolar

El Oído
Las actividades que desarrollan el sentido auditivo del niño lo preparan para distinguir las diferencias que hay en el sonido de algunas letras muy parecidas como la P y la B, S y Z, y M y N. Esta habilidad es necesaria para escribir y leer.

- Haga una colección de cintas de audio para el niño. Los almacenes de artículos variados tiene cassettes barátos. Escoja música de un solo instrumento para ayudar a que el niño se familiarize con el sonido de un intrumento en específico. Comparta información simple sobre el compositor, por ejemplo, Mozart escribió música cuando tenía 5 años- era un preescolar! Un tocacintas fácil de usar ayudará a que su niño se vuelva independiente al escoger música y al mover los controles él mismo.

- Aprenda un idioma extranjero. Los niños de 6 años o menores, tienen habilidad para aprender fácilmente un idioma extranjero. Algunos cassettes de idiomas están hechos especialmente para niños (ver Recursos de Bibliotecas, página 3). Usted también puede revisar libros en otros idiomas para principiantes. Comienze con pocas palabras cada semana y aumente de acuerdo al interés del niño.

- Buscando la campana. Este es el juego ideal para jugar antes de irse a dormir porque el niño tiene que concentrarse tranquilamente y moverse con cuidado. Para jugar, ponga una venda sobre los ojos al niño. Toque una campana o dele cuerda a una caja de música. Dígale al niño que camine en dirección del sonido hasta que lo encuentre. La venda aísla el sentido de audición del niño de manera que tendrá que apoyarse en él para encontrar el sonido.

- Relate cuentos sin dibujos. En nuestra sociedad sumamente visual, los niños tienen oportunidades muy limitadas para crear sus propias imagenes mentales. Ayude al niño a visualizar los cuentos que escucha o lee, pidiéndole que cierre los ojos mientras usted lee. Estimule al niño a crear en su mente, los dibujos del cuento.

El Gusto
- Nombre los gustos. Durante la cena, túrnese con el niño poniéndole nombres a los gustos de la comida en el plato. Dele al preescolar la oportunidad de experimentar con los cuatro sabores—dulce, agrio, amargo y salado.

- Experimente con los gustos. Experimente con algunos sabores para que el niño descubra como algunas comidas parecidas, tienen gustos totalmente diferentes. Compare el agua con el vinagre, la sal con el azúcar y el chocolate amargo con el dulce.

El Tacto
- Antes y después. Compare y describa las texturas del las siguientes comidas antes y después de cocinadas: pastas, fréjoles, masa de pan, gelatina, pudín, papas, masa de bizcochos, zanahorias y palomitas de maíz.

- Texturas iguales: Antes de desahacerse de la ropa vieja, corte dos cuadrados de tela. Quite todos los botónes antes de realizar lo siguiente; junte una variedad de texturas como el satín, algodón y franela. Póngale al niño una venda sobre los ojos. El podrá encontrar las texturas que son iguales tocándo la tela con los dedos.

- Tamaños iguales: Para esta actividad, necesitará 3 pares de botones. Dos de estos pares iguales. Cada par tiene que ser de diferente tamaño y forma. Póngalos en una bolsa. Dígale al niño que meta la mano y saque un botón que sea igual a los demás. Agregue más pares una vez que el niño haya aprendido las diferencias de los anteriores. (Cuidado: Los botones pueden producir asfixia. Utilícelos con niños de mayor edad)

- Tocar como si fuese una pluma. Algunos de los objetos que el niño va querer tocar necesitan ser tocados con delicadeza. Para demostrar el "tocar como si fuese una pluma", acaricie el brazo o la mano del niño con una pluma. Comente sobre lo liviano y suave con que la pluma toca su brazo. Las conchas de mar, un hámster y los arreglos de navidad deben ser tocados como si fuesen una pluma.

- Descubriendo el peso. Dígale al niño que levante sus brazos y que las palmas de sus manos queden mirando hacia arriba. Ponga una lata de frutas, vegetales u otro alimento en conserva, sobre cada una de las manos. Pídale, "Baja la más pesada (o) la más liviana para empezar". Haga la prueba con latas o cajas de comida del mismo tamaño pero de diferente peso.

La Vista
- "¿Puedes encontrar....?" Convierta a las figuras de imán pegadas en el refrigerador en un juego de aprendizaje. Haga preguntas, "Puedes encontrar la figura con la letra "m?" O, "Puedes encontrar dos figuras cuadradas y tres en forma de círculo?" Este juego ayudará a que el niño busque detalles específicos. Con revistas podrá hacer una versión diferente de este juego. Dígale, "En alguna página de esta revista hay una foto de (un niño cepillándose los dientes, un conejo u otro objeto conocido), lo puedes encontrar?"

- Distinguiendo tamaños: Sobre la mesa, despliegue tazas de medir que se puedan apilar. Dígale al niño que las apile. Haga la prueba con cucharas de medir una vez que haya aprendido con las tazas. En este tipo de juegos, el niño deberá distinguir los diferentes tamaños.

- El juego de las parejas. Sobre la mesa, despliegue envases de plástico de diferentes tamaños con sus tapas. Haga que el niño encuentre las parejas, es decir, los envases similares con sus respectivas tapas. Para un preescolar joven, utilize tres envases de tamaños muy diferentes. Para el preescolar más grande, pruebe con cuatro o más envases de tamaños parecidos.

(Estas actividades fueron desarrolladas en clases de la escuela Montessori y han sido rediseñadas para padres y sus hijos.)

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *September 1995*

What Preschool Teachers and Parents can learn from each other...

When it's time for children to leave preschool for grade school there are often tears in the eyes of both parents and teachers.

In the office, parents may leave books inscribed with their child's name. In the yard, a tree may get planted. Mothers and fathers are grateful for what their children have learned and they, the parents, have learned things as well.

Teachers and directors value the notes of thanks parents leave them. The children who are leaving may talk eagerly of the summer camp they will attend or the kindergarten they are headed for. But the teachers may remember that they changed diapers on this child, and held that one crying during the initial entrance into the center. They may remember they helped another child through a phase of biting or empathized with a parent through a family crisis. Teachers are grateful for having been a part of the children's lives. They have learned things from families that will enrich their teaching for years to come.

What is it that parents and teachers might have learned from each other? How does it happen that sharing the caring of young children is a learning experience for all the adults who are involved?

What parents can learn from preschool teachers:

Learning to help their child who is starting school
As soon as a child is enrolled in a preschool a parent begins to learn many things from a teacher. One parent may worry, "Will this teacher understand how bad I feel leaving my child?" Another parent may think, but not say out loud, "Have I chosen the right place, even though I must get child care quickly for that new job I will start?"

Experienced teachers inform parents right away about the importance of helping their child adjust to their new environment before leaving them. Teachers know that parents must tell children when they do leave so as not to create the anxiety that comes if a parent disappears when the child is busy playing. Parents also learn that once the child has adjusted, the longer a good-bye, the greater the tension. When parents learn these things, they soon find children eager to go to school.

Learning what to do when problems arise
Mothers and fathers will find there are periods of time when children complain: "I don't want to go to school," or "I don't have any friends." These times can be very worrisome. When the parent lets the teacher know of these concerns, a conference may be called for to talk things over. The teacher, based on her vast experience, can assess the situation. If the preschooler is having a difficult time at school, might it be due to changes at home? If the child seems to be socializing well and having a normal amount of successes and disappointments, the teacher can recommend that the mother or father observe the child during the day's routine. This helps the parent understand that children have ups and downs in their relationships at school, and that they learn and grow from these experiences. The teacher might also suggest that a parent's attitude should be that of a good listener. This helps children figure out their own problems. Every crisis at home or school can make a child a little stronger.

Learning about child growth and development
A child is the most precious thing a parent has. Parents need to be reassured when the child is having a period of growth that is bumpy. A preschool teacher may have had extensive experience with one age group — such as teaching two year olds for many years. A mother may only have one child and find the behavior of a two year old startling. If a child bites or gets bitten, or won't share toys, parents can feel upset. Teachers can reassure them by saying, "In my experience, I have found that children this age behave this way. He'll learn. I'll help him."

Sometimes teachers see

In This Issue: What Teachers Can Learn from Parents...2; Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

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continued >>>>>

behaviors that seem out of the 'normal' range . They can describe to parents the child's behavior and if needed, make recommendations for testing. Many developmental delays or disabilities profit from early intervention. There are speech teachers, neurological pediatricians, and professionals that can test children.

Learning about special children

Preschool teachers can teach adults as well as the children to have a place in their hearts for exceptional children. When children are cared for in a group, parents may often worry that their child is not getting enough attention, so children with disabilities, children with behavior problems, children who do not accept limits easily and children with little impulse control, often seem to take too much of a teacher's time. Teachers are obligated by state and federal laws to try to make space for challenging children.

Learning how to manage behavior

A teacher shows parents that she doesn't need clowns, balloons or tricks to manage the behavior of children. Instead she has information and ideas up her sleeve. While many parents find that the event of giving a birthday party is stressful, watching a teacher work daily with as many as 12 children is instructional. She moves the group with fantasy: "Lets go outside like crickets." She sings directions during potentially stressful times, "Whistle while you work, clean up time has come." She alternates periods of activity with periods of quiet. She holds the attention of a group with something interesting, like a bunch of worms from the garden, or a puppet who whispers things to her.

Teachers are good models for discipline. Nothing makes children as anxious as an environment that is not predictable. Teachers demonstrate how the cautious two year old becomes the confident five year old by her consistency in being there for the children, having a set schedule and routine, and adhering to school rules. "No hitting," means a sand shovel will be removed from the child who hits. Parents who give many warnings but have a hard time following through, can learn by watching a good preschool teacher be consistent about what will happen during the day and what is expected of children.

Learning about preschool philosophies

Preschool philosophies vary, some stressing early academics, others the current early childhood educational theories: letting children learn through active play, giving them adequate space, developmentally appropriate materials and activities, and providing warm interpersonal relationships between children and teachers.

A parent may be concerned that his child will not do well in grade school because the focus is on learning through play — and not on academics. This is the time when the teacher can explain the reasons for the preschool's educational philosophy.

What preschool teachers can learn from parents:

Learning about the individual child

Children come from families of differing economic levels and cultural backgrounds. Teachers can learn how different families live in different circumstances. During a home visit when a teacher observes the child's life style, she better understands the behavior of the child. She may also see sibling relationships that make it clear why a child behaves a certain way in school.

When teachers observe interactions between parent and child they invariably learn something useful. One parent may often stroke or hug a child affectionately; another uses words more. This gives a teacher a clue as to how to help a child who is tired or under stress. One child may need a back rubbed, another may need to hear, " Your mother is having her lunch now and thinking about what you are doing."

During conferences a parent can explain the stresses in the household or tell about abilities the child has that the preschool doesn't know about.

Learning to deal with parents' feelings

Teachers who are used to children's tears and know how to comfort, might also watch the faces of mothers or fathers who are feeling keenly the hard task the family has of separating to go to preschool. Teachers' natural empathy can extend to parents as well as children.

"That seems very worrisome to you..." is needed by the parent. Empathy is the best way to show parents the preschool understands that a parent has entrusted what is most precious in the world to the teachers there. Getting skillful at helping adults gives preschool teachers inner strengths.

Learning to use parents as resources

Parents can be a source of learning to schools in may ways. A father who works for the navy can come in his white dress uniform. He is sure to inspire marching to 'Anchors Away' or other martial music the next day. A mother who is a dentist can show the children how to brush and floss. A dad may be a musician who plays the guitar for a school sing. A mother who is an experienced gardener can help a teacher who isn't. The mother shows how to plant bean seeds and tells the teacher when to water. Every parent who shares a skill with the class helps the teacher use this information in the future.

Parents enrich teachers' knowledge in deeper ways when they show teachers something about a culture the teacher is unfamiliar with: a parent who can explain the importance of the Kwanzaa festival, or the meaning of the Purim holiday, or who introduces Filipino food for the graduating kindergarten.

Inviting parents to share their skills, their cultural ways, special holidays, or information about the work they do makes teaching enjoyable as well as informative. When teachers and parents share the caring they learn together for the benefit of all children. It does truly take a community to raise a child.

Author Bette Simons, M.S., left teaching in the Preschool Laboratory at The U. of California at Northridge 11 years ago when she started First Step Nursery School and Child Development Center in Woodland Hills, CA., which has been accredited by the Academy of Early Childhood Programs since 1985.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

***Sharing the Caring:** How to Find the Right Child Care and Make It Work for You and Your Child,* by Amy Laura Dombro and Patty Bryan. Simon & Schuster, 1991. A valuable resource for parents, offering practical advice about how they can work effectively with caregivers to ensure a positive experience for their child. Amy Dombro is also a **P&p** author.

Teacher and Child, by Dr. Haim G. Ginott. Collier Books, 1993. Although most of the discussions in this book focus on children who are beyond the preschool age, there are many important ideas about child guidance that preschool teachers can benefit from. A paperback reissue of a classic, first published in 1972.

***Teacher/Parent Communication:** Working Toward Better Understanding,* by Elizabeth J. Webster and Louise M. Ward. Preschool Publications (1-800-726-1708), 1992. The authors are specialists in the field of parent communication. In this guide (in the series *Early Childhood Fundamentals)* they discuss how parents and teachers are important to each other and how they can communicate more effectively.

***Behind the Playdough Curtain:** A Year in My Life as a Preschool Teacher,* by Patti Greenberg Wollman. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994. An engaging story of a dedicated preschool teacher and the children and families that her life touches.

Books for Children about their parents and teachers

By the Dawn's Early Light, by Karen Ackerman. Atheneum, 1994. Mom works in a factory from 7:00 at night until 3:00 in the morning. At home the two children and their Nana sit down to eat their dinner at home as Mom waits in line to punch her time card at work. Through the evening as the children do their chores and prepare for bed, they think about Mom and what she's doing just then. Sometimes, when she returns from work, the children wake up and Mom and the children spend the time happily together by the dawn's early light.

When Daddy Came to School, by Julie Brillhart. Albert Whitman, 1995. A little boy tells in rhyme about the wonderful time he had on his third birthday — when Daddy came to spend the day at his preschool.

The Runaway Bunny, by Margaret Wise Brown. HarperChildren's Audio, 1989. The little bunny wants to run away, but his mother assures him that she will always be there for him. A package with the paperback book of this classic story, along with an audiocassette, should appeal to all preschoolers.

The Best Teacher in the World, by Bernice Chardiet and Grace Maccarone. Scholastic, 1990. Bunny is thrilled to be chosen by her teacher, Ms. Darcy, to take a note to Mrs. Walker. But the little girl gets lost on the way to Mrs. Walker's room. She feels just terrible, but Ms. Darcy, the best teacher in the world, teaches her that it's all right to ask questions when there's something you don't know.

Poor Monty, by Anne Fine. Clarion Books, 1991. Monty isn't feeling well at all, but when he describes his symptoms to his mom, she is too busy to listen as she's reading her paper after a hard day at work — as a doctor! Monty finally helps her to realize that he needs her right then as a mom and as a doctor, and she goes about helping him to feel better.

Growing in Day Care, by Lynnrae & Steven Francis. Francis Family Publishing (3901 Dartmouth Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55345), 1991. Color photographs show preschoolers, infants and toddlers in daily activities at day care. Simple text makes the story easy for the youngest children to understand.

Even if I Spill My Milk? by Anna Grossnickle Hines. Clarion, 1994. A little boy, whose parents are going to a party, engages his mother in conversation about how she will always love him. Her patient, reassuring answers help him to get ready for bed. There is also the promise of a story to be read by the babysitter as his parents leave for the evening.

When You Go to Kindergarten, by James Howe. Mulberry Books edition, 1995. This book is an ideal introduction to a new experience. With color photographs of boys and girls in real school activities: playing with blocks, painting, reading, and making friends with everyone including the teacher, who will be "your best grown-up friend at school."

Papa's Stories, by Dolores Johnson. Macmillan, 1994. Kari loves to have her papa read to her. The stories are filled with magic, and the words change each time he reads them. But a friend who knows how to read comes to play, and Kari learns that her favorite book has words that are completely different from the ones Papa reads. Kari confronts Papa and finds that he never learned to read, and that all the stories were ones he made up. This touching story is filled with love between father and daughter.

First Day of School, by Helen Oxenbury. Puffin Pied Piper edition, 1993. This author/illustrator of many fine children's books, tells about the first day of nursery school with humor and understanding.

Dear Daddy, by John Schindel. Albert Whitman, 1995. Jesse lives with his mother while his father lives on the other side of the country. Jesse misses his father, and telephone calls aren't satisfying enough and end too soon. So Jesse's mother takes out an old typewriter and the little boy and his father communicate through the mails until they can see each other next summer.

Jonathan and His Mommy, by Irene Smalls. Little, Brown, 1992. A loving mother and her little boy walk through their neighborhood, taking different kinds of steps from giant steps and reggae steps to slow-motion steps and backward steps, until they are tired and walk home together.

Bibliography by Betty Farber

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Planning Lunch

When my daughter turned five she was able to stay for the extended preschool program, which lasted until 1 P.M. How excited she was to be able to eat lunch with her friends and her teacher! Although many preschools and day care centers provide a hot lunch, there might be days when your preschooler wants to bring her lunch. Here are some tips on planning and preparing lunch to eat either at home or away:

Lunch is More Than a Snack
Because of their smaller stomachs, preschoolers need to eat every few hours. Between-meal snacks are a natural part of a preschooler's day. A snack should include a drink and one to two items from the food pyramid (see **P&p** 2/95), such as milk, crackers and apple slices. Lunch is *more* than a snack. While a snack might include two or three items, a lunch could have four or five.

An important difference is lunch should also include a high-protein food such as beans, nuts, eggs, beef, chicken, or fish. Bread or grains, fruits or vegetables, and milk and/or cheese complete the menu. Even if your preschooler doesn't eat foods from every section of the pyramid for each meal, he can eat these foods within each day, either for snacks or meals. You might not be there to see what he chooses to eat from the lunch you packed, but you can plan, offer and observe his eating habits another part of the day, such as each morning and evening.

Although sandwiches are traditional and satisfying for lunch, there are other possibilities. Refreshing salads made from vegetables, pasta, beans, or rice can be carried in a washable plastic bowl with a lid. (Be sure to include a spoon or fork.) Tempt your preschooler with fruited muffins, crunchy breadsticks or pretzels.

Keep it Cool

Unless your preschool has a refrigerator to hold all the lunches, you will need to keep food from spoiling. There are several ways to accomplish this:

- freeze bread for sandwiches. It will defrost by lunch time.
- freeze filling for sandwiches (do not freeze mayonnaise).
- freeze juice; place in lunch box. It should defrost by lunch time.
- place a "freezer pack" in lunch box

Make Foods Fun

There are several quick and easy ways to make lunches more fun. Cut your preschooler's initial into the sandwich. Use a variety of animal cookie cutters to cut sandwich shapes. Add crunch and texture by including fruit and/or vegetable bits to sandwiches or salads.

My preschoolers loved having a picture-note in their lunch. Your preschooler might recognize her name written on a slip of paper, or a simple message such as, "I ♥ you". Upbeat symbols: flowers, rainbows, etc. can be added by hand or by using a rubber stamp.

When to Prepare Lunches

The night before a preschool day is a good time to make lunch and leave it in the refrigerator overnight. Mornings can be very hectic. A Sunday evening is a good time to make items you will be freezing for the week ahead.

If lunches are offered by your preschool or day care, read through the menus with your preschooler each week or month, and decide when they want to eat the school lunch and when they want to bring lunch. Post the menu in a prominent place like the refrigerator, for quick reference.

Preschoolers Can Help

A preschooler can help with lunch according to his age and ability. Your preschooler can help by:

- deciding what to bring (guide your preschooler to pick a food from each section of the food pyramid.)
- stirring salad &/or snack mixture
- placing items in reusable plastic container or wrapping items in plastic wrap
- placing items in lunch box or paper sack
- wiping counters after lunch is prepared

Just as soon as your preschooler wants to help, let her learn this skill in taking care of herself. In the coming years, your child should grow into taking responsibility for preparing her lunch.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
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two year..........72.00
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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de septiembre, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, numero 7) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Lo que los padres y los profesores pueden aprender el uno del otro . . .

Cuando el niño termina la prescuela para luego ingresar a la escuela primaria, muchas veces hay lágrimas en los ojos de los padres y en los de sus profesores.

Puede qùe los padres dejen libros con el nombre del niño en ala oficinas de la escuela y en el patio quizás se plante un árbol. Tanto los padres como las madres están agradecidos por lo que han aprendido sus hijos, y por las cosas que han aprendido ellos mismos.

Los profesores y los directores de la escuela valoran las tarjetas de agradecimiento que envían los padres. Puede que los niños que se van a hablen en forma entusiasta sobre el campamento de verano al que ira, o sobre el Kindergarten al que asistirán al año siguiente. Pero los profesores recordarán que le cambiaron los pañales a ese niño, y que abrazaron a ese otro que lloraba en su primer día de clases. Que le ayudaron a superar la etapa en que mordía a otro o que ayudaron a algún padre durante una crisis familiar. El profesor está agradecido por haber sido parte de la vida del niño, ha aprendido cosas de estas familias las que enriquecerán su forma de enseñar durante años.

¿Qué es lo que el padre y el profesor aprenden el uno del otro? ¿Cómo se transforma el compartir el cuidado del niño en una experiencia de aprendizaje para todos los adultos involucrados?

Lo que los padres puede aprender de los profesores de la prescuela:

Aprendiendo a ayudar al niño que comienza la prescuela
El padre comienza a aprender del profesor desde el momento en que inscribe a su hijo en la prescuela. El o ella podrá preocuparse y pensar, "¿El profesor, comprenderá lo mal que me siento al dejar a mi hijo aquí?" Otro podrá preguntarse sin decirlo, "¿Escogí el sitio adecuado a pesar de que necesito que lo cuiden de inmediato porque comienzo con un nuevo trabajo?"

Los profesores con experiencia le explican inmediatamente a los padres sobre la importancia de ayudar al niño a que se acostumbre al nuevo entorno, antes de dejarlo allí. El profesor sabe que el padre le tiene que decir al niño que se va a ir, cosa de no producirle angustia, la que se manifiesta cuando él está jugando tranquilamente y luego se da cuenta de que su madre se ha ido sin aviso.

Los padres también saben que una vez que el niño se ha acostumbrado a la escuela, mientras más larga sea la despedida más grande será la tensión. Cuando aprenden estas cosas no tardan en tener un hijo ansioso de ir a la escuela.

Aprendiendo a resolver los problemas que se presentan
Los padres tendrán en sus manos situaciones en que el niño se quejará y les dirá, "No quiero ir a la escuela" o "No tengo amigos." Esta etapa puede ser muy inquietante. Cuando el padre le informa al profesor que él está preocupado, entonces se cita a una reunión para hablar las cosas. El profesor puede evaluar la situación en base a su experiencia. Si el preescolar está pasando por un periodo difícil en la escuela, ¿puede que esto se deba a cambios en el hogar? Si el niño se está adaptando en forma normal y tiene su cuota normal de éxitos y desilusiones, el profesor podrá recomendar que la madre o el padre lo observen durante su rutina diaria. Esto ayuda a que los padres comprendan que los niños tienen sus altibajos en lo que se refiere a las relaciones en la escuela, y que crecen y aprenden de éstas. El profesor también puede sugerirle al padre que aprenda y sepa escuchar a su hijo. Esto ayuda a que los niños se den cuenta solos de sus problemas. Las crisis tanto en la escuela como en casa hacen que ellos sean cada vez más fuertes.

Aprendiendo sobre el crecimiento y el desarrollo del niño
Un niño es lo más precioso que un padre puede tener. Los padres necesitan que se les tranquilice cuando su hijo está pasando por un época de crecimiento irregular. Puede que un profesor tenga experiencia en la enseñanza de niños de una edad determinada por mucho tiempo, por ejemplo, de dos años de edad. A una madre que tiene un solo hijo le puede parecer alarmante el comportamiento de un niño de esa edad. Si el niño muerde o es mordido o no comparte sus juguetes, el padre puede molestarse. El profesor hacerlo sentir mejor diciéndole, "En mi experiencia, he encontrado que los niños de esta edad se comportan así. El aprenderá y yo lo ayudaré."

A veces, los educadores ven tipos de comportamientos que parecen estar fuera de 'los rangos normales'. Ellos pueden explicarle a los padres la conducta del niño y si es necesario recomendar que se le haga un examen. Muchas formas de retraso en el

continuará >>>>>>

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desarrollo o impedimentos se pueden contrarrestar con atención e intervención temprana. Hay fonoaudiólogos, neurólogos infantiles y profesionales que pueden examinar al niño.

Aprendiendo sobre niños especiales

El profesor de la prescuela puede enseñar tanto a padres como a hijos a que reserven un espacio en su corazón para los niños con impedimentos o necesidades especiales. Cuando se cuida a los niños en grupo, el padre muchas veces se preocupa de que su hijo no está recibiendo la atención suficiente. Los niños con impedimentos, problemas de conducta, los que no aceptan fácilmente las normas y aquellos que no controlan sus impulsos efectivamente, muchas veces le quitan demasiado tiempo al profesor. Las leyes estatales y federales obligan a que los educadores reciban y eduquen a los niños que tienen este tipo de problemas.

Aprendiendo a controlar el comportamiento del niño

El profesor le demuestra al padre que no necesita un payaso o un globo, o hacer determinados trucos para controlar el comportamiento del niño. En cambio, tiene información y buenas ideas. Mientras algunos padres piensan que el organizar la fiesta de cumpleaños de su hijo es un trabajo tensionante, el observar como una profesora trabaja diariamente con 12 niños puede servir de ejemplo. Maneja al grupo con fantasía: "Salgamos como si fuésemos saltamontes." En situaciones de tensión, les da instrucciones cantando, "Silbemos mientras trabajamos.....ha llegado la hora de limpiar." Va alternando las horas de mucha actividad con horas de silencio. Mantiene la atención del grupo con la ayuda de elementos tan interesantes, como un montón de lombrices de jardín o con un títere que le susurra cosas al oído.

El profesor es un buen modelo de disciplina. Lo que más le produce ansiedad al niño es un entorno impredecible. El educador demuestra como un niño cauteloso de dos años, puede convertirse en un niño de cinco años seguro de sí mismo por el sólo hecho de estar en la escuela, teniendo un horario y una rutina y respetando las reglas de la escuela. "No hay que pegar," significa que se le quitará la pala de arena al niño que la usó para pegar. El padre que advierte demasiado al hijo pero que luego le resulta difícil tomar medidas, puede aprender mucho observando a un buen profesor de prescuela que es consistente sobre lo que pasará durante el día y lo que se puede esperar del niño.

Aprendiendo sobre la filosofía de las prescuelas

La filosofía de las prescuelas varía. Algunas ponen énfasis en el estudio a temprana edad, otras aplican las últimas teorías en educación infantil: dejar que el niño aprenda por medio de los juegos, darle el espacio suficiente, además de materiales y actividades de desarrollo adecuados para la edad, y proporcionan relaciones interpersonales cálidas entre el niño y el profesor.

Un padre pueda preocuparse de que el niño no tendrá éxito en la escuela primaria porque está aprendiendo por medio de los juegos- y no estudiando. Este es el momento en que el profesor puede explicarle al padre la filosofía educacional de la prescuela.

Lo que los profesores pueden aprender de los padres

Aprendiendo sobre el niño en forma individual

Los niños vienen de familias de diferente nivel económico y cultural. El profesor puede aprender como viven las familias que provienen de diferentes medios. Cuando el educador va a la casa del alumno y observa su estilo de vida, entiende mejor su conducta. También podrá ver la relación entre hermanos lo que lo hará entender el porqué del comportamiento del niño en el colegio.

Cuando el profesor observa la interacción entre un padre y su hijo aprende cosas útiles. Un padre puede que acaricie o abrace a su niño en forma afectuosa, mientras otro solamente le hablará. Esto le da al educador pistas de como ayudar al niño que está cansado o con estrés. Un niño puede que necesite que le froten la espalda, en cambio otro necesita escuchar, "Tu madre está almorzando y está pensando en ti."

Durante las reuniones el padre puede explicarle al profesor el estrés que se está viviendo en casa o contarle sobre aquellas habilidades del niño que no se conocen en la prescuela.

Aprendiendo a tratar con los sentimientos de los padres

El educador está acostumbrado a ver a los niños llorando y sabe como consolarlos, puede que al ver la cara de la madre o del padre se refleje la dura tarea que es para la familia el separarse del niño para que vaya a la prescuela. La empatía natural del profesor también se puede extender tanto a los padres como a los niños.

El padre necesita que le digan, "Eso parece preocuparle mucho...." La empatía es la mejor forma de demostrarle a los padres que la escuela entiende que le han confiado a los profesores lo más valioso que ellos poseen. El ser hábil con los padres le da al profesor una fuerza interior.

Aprendiendo a utilizar a los padres como un recurso

En muchas formas, los padres pueden ser una fuente de aprendizaje para las escuelas. Un padre que trabaja en la marina puede llegar a clase vestido con su uniforme. Lo más probable es que haga que al día siguiente los niños escuchen el tema 'Anchors Away' u otra música relacionada con los marinos. Una madre que es dentista puede mostrarle a los niños como lavarse los dientes. Un padre puede ser el músico que toque la guitarra durante un día que los niños canten. Una madre experta en el jardín puede ayudar a una profesora que no lo es. La madre muestra como se plantan las semillas de fríjoles y le dice al educador cuando hay que regarlas. Todos los padres que comparten alguna de sus habilidades con la clase ayudan a que el profesor use esa información en el futuro.

El padre enriquece el conocimiento del profesor de forma más profunda cuando le muestra algo de una cultura que no conoce. Por ejemplo, un padre que pueda explicar la importancia del festival de Kwanzaa, el significado del feriado Purim o aquel que lleva comida filipina el día de la graduación.

El invitar a los padres a que compartan sus habilidades, su cultura y tradiciones o información sobre el trabajo que realizan, hace que la enseñanza se disfrute y que sea informativa. Cuando el profesor y el padre comparten el cuidado, aprenden juntos en beneficio de los niños. No hay duda que criar a un niño involucra a toda la comunidad.

La autora, Bette Simons, M.S., dejó la enseñanza en el Laboratorio de la Preescuela de la Universidad de California en Northridge hace 11 años atrás, cuando comenzó con el First Step Nursery School and Child Development Center en Woodland Hills, CA. Este ha sido reconocido por la Academy of Early Childhood Programs desde 1985.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 8 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *October 1995*

Talking about your children in front of them

- "She is just like my sister—clumsy as an elephant."
- "This is my artistic son, and this is my smart one."
- "You're just like your father. Your temper is atrocious."

As children we heard our parents do it, and so as parents ourselves, we often make the same mistake. You say something to, or about, your child within his earshot. Though you intend it as an innocent remark, your child interprets it very differently. To him, it may sound like a judgment you have passed on him. And whether you realize it or not, you may be passing a lot of these judgments about your children in front of them.

MY SON STILL SUCKS HIS THUMB

Whether you say it to the child directly, or she hears you say it to others, what you say about a child communicates reams about what you think of her, and thereby contributes substantially to the child's own definition of herself.

The reason these parental evaluations take up such a prominent place in the child's self-image is that at the core of a child's identity is how he believes his parents view him. At times this can work to a child's advantage. A woman I know remembers her father always telling her what a tough kid she was. "She can handle anything," he'd brag to others. "You're tough," he'd tell her, "just like your old man." To this day, whenever things get rough, and she wonders if she'll get through some trying times, she recalls her father's characterization of her: "Dad always said I'm tough. I can do it!"

But even such positive evaluations of a child's capabilities can work against her. If you believe that your choice is either to tough it out on your own or disappoint your parent, you may end up unable to ask for help when you really need it. It goes almost without saying that when parental evaluations are pointedly negative, the effects can be devastating. Tell a child he's clumsy often enough, and he may never try out for any athletic teams. Complain that he never does anything right, and he may begin to grow into a ne'er-do-well.

As parents, we sometimes forget that kids often take negative comments more seriously than we do.

First, adults learn to make small talk, just to be sociable, and often fill this small talk with what they believe to be amusing but innocuous characterizations about others. Children hear these characterizations as well-thought-out ideas.

Second, adults learn to evaluate a criticism made of them in the context of all their strengths and weaknesses. But young kids frequently see things from an all-or-nothing point of view. You mention that his room is dirty and offhandedly call him a slob. You may mean it for that moment only, but he incorporates it into his sense of himself.

To some extent, talking about your child in front of him can be a no-win proposition. Will your positive comments bring too much pressure to bear, or will a negative comment be taken too much to heart? And what parent hasn't blurted out something not meant for a child's ears, something the parent would do anything to take back?

The Child's-Eye View

Toddlers
Though toddlers are somewhat less able than older children to interpret the words used to address or describe them, they will pick up on your tone of voice, your body language, and your impatience. You may never express the thought that you're a little concerned about your toddler's slow progress in developing manual dexterity, but when you grab the shoe she's trying to put on out of her hands and shove it on her foot quickly, she gets the message. Of course, every parent has moments when time constraints almost force such reactions. But a toddler whose parents regularly show respect and admiration for her efforts at independence will really blossom.

continued >>>>>

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Preschool-Age Children

A preschool-age child is more verbal and has a greater understanding of what you're saying about him. He's also become aware of social situations where an adult may be evaluating him. If an adult walks into a preschool classroom, for example, every child will begin to put on a show, because this is the age at which children start to care about what adults think of them, and each child assumes himself to be the center of attention. As a result of these new concerns about adult recognition, the preschooler is starting to be quite sensitive to what he hears you say about him to others. He may not always understand all the words, especially because parents often talk in code in front of children this age, but he may understand he's being talked about and dislike it.

Parents sometimes make the mistake of telling others about a preschooler's needs and wants—before the child has had a chance to speak up for himself. The preschooler may need a few seconds to respond to questions. If a parent is always rushing in to fill any silent moment, the child does not get a chance to gain mastery over her communication skills — indeed, she may learn that it does not pay to think before you speak. Your child may also be offended that you are presuming to know how she feels or what she wants to say to others.

Another factor that comes into play here is that a preschooler can be quite sensitive to your telling others about his strengths and weaknesses. He's already started to become aware that he isn't good at everything, and it frustrates him to hear you point that out. Besides, kids should never hear you make judgments about them because such remarks can limit even further their own sense of what they can and can't do.

Preschoolers will also begin to feel embarrassed about stories you tell others about their babyish ways, such as having a security blanket or sucking a thumb. Your preschooler may now be even more sensitive to gestures of nonconfidence than when she was a toddler. You grab the orange juice away before she has a chance to try pouring it. Or you say impatiently, "Let me do it, I'll take care of it," as though you don't have any trust in her abilities. A preschooler may also be more sensitive than you realize about out-loud comparisons you make to his siblings, especially older ones.

In fact, all it may take to hit a sensitive nerve is encouraging him to do something an older sibling did at that age. One mother I know, whose older child learned his letters at a very young age, began talking about letters with her second child at that same young age. But he just wasn't that interested. "Gee," she said innocently, "Matthew loved doing his letters when he was your age!" To which her preschooler replied loudly: "Me not Matthew! "

Missteps Parents Make

- *Labeling a child negatively.* Any negative label, regularly applied, can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Calling a child a slob, a klutz, a troublemaker, or a goof-off, either to her or in angry complaint to your spouse, relatives, or friends, can almost guarantee that the child will come to think of herself that way. This is especially true if you preface your labels with "You're always such a . . ."

- *Overpraising or bragging about your child.* I remember one youngster I knew, whose parents overgenerously praised a poem he wrote. They talked about it for days, made copies to send to friends and relatives, and even mailed it to the local newspaper. The child never wrote another poem, apparently convinced he could never again meet the extraordinary standards implied by his parents' gushing enthusiasm.

- *Talking about a child's problems or weaknesses as though she or he were not in the room.* You're having a conversation with a friend or a relative about some problem your son is having. You're fretting and you really need to tell someone, but you forget that your child is probably fretting about it, too. Whether his teacher says he never pays attention, or he's still wetting the bed, you divulge some secret, and he suddenly sits bolt upright. "Mom!" he remonstrates, before running from the room in tears.

  You've exposed your child in a very painful way. We all deserve to have private matters kept private, and he may begin to feel panicked that he can't trust you to keep his secrets.

- *Comparing siblings in front of them.* Nothing can be more enraging to a child of almost any age than hearing "Your brother would never do such a thing" or "Why can't you be more like your sister?" Sometimes parents mean well and try to find nice things to say about each sibling but still wind up in trouble. For example, the child who repeatedly hears that he's artistic, while his older brother is the intellectual one, may believe he can't achieve academically and therefore shouldn't bother trying. You should be especially careful not to make comparisons while both siblings are in the room. The one suffering in the comparison will feel doubly humiliated that his or her sibling was allowed to hear it. And the one being praised may feel a mixture of glee and guilt for getting accolades at a sibling's expense.

- *Telling cute stories about or laughing at a child.* You can't expect children to accept jokes at their expense in a good-natured way, or to understand that adults do not intend to mock children when they make jokes at their expense. Saying to a child, "I'm not laughing at you; it's just that you're so cute," doesn't comfort the child or assure him that you're really on his side.

- *Ranting about the difficulties of parenting.* "She's driving me crazy, I can't wait for school to start," said an exasperated mother recently, while her daughter stared up at her. All of us joke good-humoredly about the challenges of parenting. But if you're doing it in front of your child, you may cause her to feel that she really is a burden that you'd rather not have around. You certainly never want your child to hear you wish her away.

- *Telling kids that they've inherited your own or your spouse's traits.* "You are just like your father. Your temper is atrocious." Especially in families where the parents are fighting or are divorced, it's hard to avoid blurting out comments such as these. For recently divorced parents, the children may serve as haunting reminders of the person who has brought so much grief to the other. But you have to be careful that your children don't bear the brunt of anger that's not really intended for them.

New Moves

The underlying theme of each of the new moves described below is that you ought to treat your child with respect and attempt to see things from her point of view. In doing this, you convey to her that she is worthy of your regard for her as her own person.

- *New Move 1: Give your child affirmations.* Affirmations are statements that declare to a child that you believe in him. One man remembered that his father once said to him, "Son, you have a good head on your shoulders. You're going to amount to something." Over the years, his father's words often gave him confidence when he most needed it.

continued >>>>>

Affirmations don't suggest that you expect perfection from your child. They simply tell him that you think he's capable and competent just because of who he is.

- *New Move 2; Tell your children that you accept them as valuable and unique members of your family.* Tell each child, "I'm really glad you're part of this family." Make clear that your acceptance isn't based on performance in school or at the piano, but that you appreciate the child's unique personality traits, talents, and abilities—even if they aren't the same as yours or those of his or her siblings.

- *New Move 3: Praise children appropriately.* The key to reasonable praise is to do it only when it is deserved and appropriate. Discerning and praising a child's true gifts, even if they don't fit in with your view of success, is the key to helping kids feel good about themselves.

- *New Move 4: Criticize children with sensitivity.* When you must express disappointment because of something a child has done, be critical without being heavy-handed.

- *New Move 5: Rather than labeling kids, analyze the behavior behind the label.* Instead of calling a child a slob, express your anger at the mess he made. If you roll up your sleeves and work with him as he cleans it up, he won't feel that you're attacking him, and your participation in solving the problem tells him you're still on his side.

When you start with these new moves, you'll find it much easier not to talk about your children in front of them in a way that will hurt or trouble them.

This article was adapted from Chapter 10 of *"Not in Front of the Children..."* by Dr. Lawrence Balter. Viking Penguin, 1993. Dr. Balter is Professor of Applied Psychology at New York University, contributing editor and columnist for *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Sesame Street Parents' Guide*, radio and TV personality, and book author.

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Self Sufficiency

In this day and age, when more and more prepared food is being sold, something is being lost. It's the essence of being self-sufficient, of not depending on any store to supply your basic need for food. That feeling is rekindled for many during the beginning of the harvest season. In the month of October where we live in Northwest Missouri, farmers are in the fields harvesting soybeans and corn. The cool air is refreshing and promises a winter where a warm kitchen will be a place to gather.

Before the weather gets really cold, we like to enjoy one last barbecue, as a reminder of the more carefree summer days. "We can't have a barbecue," I thought. "There's no more barbecue sauce..." I thought again, and felt indignant. Why should I depend on a bottle from a store?

I looked in one if my favorite cookbooks The New York Times Heritage Cookbook by Jean Hewitt (Putnam, 1972) and found seven types of barbecue sauces from all over the country. One from the Midwest looked most appealing. I adapted it to the ingredients I had on hand.

What is barbecue sauce? My recipe called for ketchup, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, parsley, onion, garlic, chili powder. How funny it was to realize I was just depending on a different set of jars. But ketchup was a staple we always had on hand. I have prepared a version of Worcestershire sauce from its main ingredients of vinegar, molasses and soy sauce.

I mixed up a small batch of barbecue sauce, just enough for supper, and there was a certain pride in the creation, and the conservation of energy (not having to run to the store). You might want to teach your preschooler what ingredients mix into a barbecue sauce.

People often shy away from making basic sauces, syrups, or salad dressings they have always purchased. Many are easy to make, and require no special skill or equipment.

One advantage to creating your own sauces, syrups and dressings is you know exactly what ingredients are blended together. So once you and your preschooler have made "homemade pancake syrup", you might limit the quantity you drizzle on, because you will know pancake syrup is corn syrup, sugar, water and maple flavoring. Or you might want to substitute fresh fruit on the waffles.

There have been times I've bought lettuce, but forgot to buy dressing. I've made several salad dressings I have liked better than the bottled variety. Maybe you will add just the right spice to your dressing, and have a unique creation.

Of course, your sauce-making might only occur out of necessity, as mine often does. Or you might decide to make your own all the time. Whatever you decide, I hope you capture the feeling of self-sufficiency as you enjoy the harvest.

Barbecue Sauce

1 cup ketchup
1 teaspoon vinegar
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon chili powder
dash Worcestershire sauce
dash dried parsley
dash black pepper

Preschoolers can smell and possibly taste each ingredient. Stir all ingredients together in a small saucepan. Place over high heat. Bring to a boil. Simmer on low 5 minutes to blend flavors. Remove from heat. Brush on barbecuing chicken, beef or pork the last few minutes of cooking.

Pancake Syrup

1 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup water
1/4 teaspoon maple extract

Preschoolers can help measure ingredients. In a 1 quart saucepan, combine corn syrup, brown sugar, and water. Bring to a boil while stirring, so sugar will not burn. Then turn down heat to low and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add maple extract. Serve over pancakes or waffles.

Thousand Island Dressing

1/2 cup mayonnaise,
regular or low-fat
1/2 cup ketchup
1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish

Preschoolers can help measure and stir together ingredients. Measure mayonnaise, ketchup, and pickle relish into a bowl. Stir. Chill until meal time. Serve over salad greens.

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LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

"Not in Front of the Children..." How to Talk to Your Child About Tough Family Matters, by Dr. Lawrence Balter, with Peggy Jo Donahue. Viking, 1993. In this valuable parenting guide, Dr. Balter explains how to approach such topics as divorce, sex, illness, and death, with children of different ages. He gives practical suggestions about appropriate ways to talk to toddlers, preschoolers, and older children about these and other difficult subjects. The featured article in this issue of **Parent and preschooler** is adapted from chapter 10, *Talking About Your Children in Front of Them*. Dr. Balter is also the author of ***Who's in Control? Dr. Balter's Guide to Discipline,*** Simon & Schuster, 1989, and other books for parents and children.

Books for Children About Growth and Self-esteem

Bub or The Very Best Thing, by Natalie Babbitt. Michael di Capua Books/HarperCollins, 1994. "One day in the castle the King and the Queen had an argument." They quarreled about this question: what is the very best thing for the Prince? Is it toys? Is it lessons? The King looks in his books for the answer. The Queen talks to everyone she meets in the castle. But every book says something else, and each person has a different answer. Finally, they ask the cook's daughter, who asks the young Prince. He answers, "Bub." The cook's daughter is clever enough to understand. The King and Queen might even figure it out some day too!

So Much, by Trish Cooke. Candlewick Press, 1994. The doorbell rings and one by one the relatives come to visit. And they all want to hug and kiss and squeeze the baby because everybody loves the baby so much! The author is a Caribbean native and the illustrations reflect the cuddling that her own baby receives from her family. The pictures, by master illustrator Helen Oxenbury, are brimming with love.

While I Am Little, by Heidi Goennel. Tambourine Books, 1993. A little boy expresses his feelings about the joys and pleasures of being little. The simple, colorful illustrations by the author/illustrator complement the upbeat, childlike language.

The Baby's Book of Babies, by Kathy Henderson. Puffin Pied Piper, 1993. Colorful photographs by Anthea Sieveking of multiethnic babies engaged in a variety of activities. Perfect for toddlers but all ages will enjoy the rollicking rhymes: "...babies rolling,/looking, strolling... babies tasting,/chewing, pasting..."

The Biggest Boy, by Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books, 1995. Billy can eat with a fork. He can get dressed all alone. His mother and father tell him he is growing bigger and bigger. That starts Billy and his parents imagining how it would be to be the biggest boy in the world, where he would wear the roof as a hat, and could move the clouds by blowing on them. But right now, his parents agree, "You are just the right size for a big boy your age."

Chatting, by Shirley Hughes. Candlewick Press, 1994. The little girl in this story loves to chat. She chats with the cat, with friends in the park, and on the telephone with Grandma and Grandpa. The author/illustrator is well known for her *Alfie* books, and her pictures are filled with affection and understanding of family life.

Horace, by Holly Keller. Mulberry Books edition, 1994. At bedtime, Horace's mother (a tiger with stripes) always tells him the same story, "We chose you when you were a tiny baby because you had lost your first family and needed a new one." Horace doesn't look like his parents: he has spots and his parents have stripes. He runs away and finds children who look just like him to play with. But Horace misses his own family and returns to them at night, providing his own ending to the story of how he was chosen.

When Spring Comes, by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock. Dutton Children's Books, 1993. A young girl, living on a farm in the early 1900s looks forward to the activities of the coming spring: running barefoot through the fields, gathering wild strawberries for Grandma's biscuits.... She wakes from her reverie to the sound of jingle bells, and joyfully joins her father for a ride through the snow — enjoying the wonder of the present season, as well as the anticipation of spring.

Where Do Little Girls Grow? by Milly Jane Limmer. Albert Whitman & Co., 1993. A little girl asks her mother, "Where did I come from?" And the two of them laughingly concoct fantasies about her arriving in a balloon from the sky, a shelf in a grocery store, or a nest in a tree. Until the mother tells her daughter the true answer: "I carried you within myself, safe and warm, secretly./ I felt you grow close to my heart, curled up inside of me."

A Big Day for Little Jack, by Inga Moore. Candlewick Press, 1994. Little Jack Rabbit gets an invitation to a party. But he's never been to a party before, and he's afraid to go alone. So he asks each member of the family to go with him. Grandpa suggests that he take his toy bunny instead, with happy results. A gentle story about a youngster facing new experiences.

Gina, by Bernard Waber. Houghton Mifflin, 1995. In this lively tale in verse, a little girl, Gina, moves to a new apartment building, where there are only boys to play with — not a girl in sight. But the boys won't play with Gina, until she shows them how well she does with a baseball and bat. Then they find that she's good at lots of things. A appealing story about a fun-loving heroine.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

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**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

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one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
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Pp
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de octubre, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 8) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Hablando de su niño cuando él está presente

- "Es igual que mi hermana — torpe como un elefante."
- "Este es mi hijo artista y este es mi hijo inteligente."
- "Eres igual que tu padre; tu carácter es atroz."

Cuando éramos niños escuchamos a nuestros padres decir cosas parecidas. Ahora que nosotros somos padres, muchas veces cometemos los mismos errores. Decimos algo sobre nuestros hijos delante de ellos. Aunque la intención del comentario puede ser inocente, el niño lo interpreta de manera muy diferente. A él le puede parecer que lo juzgan, y aunque usted no se dé cuenta, quizás sí lo está haciendo frecuentemente delante de él.

No importa si lo dice directamente o que él lo escuche al decirlo a los demás, lo que usted dice con respecto a su hijo, habla muy elocuentemente sobre lo que Ud. piensa de él, y por lo tanto, influye en la definición que él tiene de sí misma.

La razón por la cual la evaluación que hace el padre sobre el hijo tiene un papel determinante en la imagen que éste tiene sobre sí mismo, es porque lo que sus padres piensan de él, es el factor más importante de su identidad. A veces esto puede ser un beneficio para el niño. Una mujer que conozco recuerda cuando su padre le decía lo fuerte que era. "Puede manejar todo," comentaba a sus amigos. A ella le decía, "Eres fuerte igual que tu padre." Hasta hoy día, cuando las cosas se ponen difíciles y ella piensa que no va a ser capaz, recuerda lo que su padre pensaba, "Papá dijo que yo era fuerte. Yo sé que lo puedo hacer!"

Pero hasta los comentarios positivos sobre las capacidades del niño pueden jugar en su contra. Si usted piensa que puede elegir entre el ser fuerte por sí solo, o desilusionar a sus padres, puede que no sea capaz de pedir ayuda cuando la necesite. No hace falta agregar que cuando los comentarios de los padres son siempre negativos, los efectos pueden ser devastadores. Si le dice al niño en forma continua que es torpe, puede que nunca intente formar parte de un equipo atlético. Si se queja de que nunca hace bien las cosas, puede que se convierta en un niño que no sabe hacer las cosas en forma correcta.

A veces los padres nos olvidamos que los hijos toman nuestros comentarios mucho más en serio que nosotros.

Primero, los adultos aprenden a conversar en forma trivial sólo para socializar, y muchas veces este tipo de conversación la matizan con comentarios que ellos piensan divertidos sobre otra gente. Pero éstos son sólo caracterizaciones inofensivas de los demás. Los niños escuchan este tipo de comentarios y creen que son ideas bien pensadas. Segundo, los adultos aprenden a evaluar las críticas que se les hacen dentro del contexto de sus fortalezas y sus debilidades. Pero muchas veces, los niños ven las cosas desde de un punto de vista mucho más categórico. Usted le menciona que su habitación está sucia y le dice que es un vago. Quizás en ese momento piense así, pero el niño lo percibe como un comentario sobre su persona.

Hasta cierto punto, hablar sobre el niño cuando está presente puede ser algo que a la larga no tiene beneficiados. ¿Le traerá un comentario positivo demasiada presión, la que luego no podrá soportar, o será el comentario negativo tomado demasiado en serio? ¿Y qué padre no ha dicho algo sin querer y que después haría cualquier cosa por borrar?

La visión panorámica del niño

Niños Pequeños

Aunque los niños pequeños no son tan capaces de interpretar las palabras o comentarios que los describen, sí aprenderán por el tono de voz, el lenguaje corporal o la impaciencia que usted demuestre. Quizás usted nunca se preocupe por la forma pausada en que su hijo aprende a desarrollar sus destrezas manuales. Pero el niño entenderá el mensaje, cuando usted le quite bruscamente el zapato de la mano cuando trate de ponérselo, y luego se lo ponga impacientemente. Por supuesto que todos los padres tienen momentos en que la falta de tiempo los obliga a reaccionar así. Pero el niño pequeño, cuyo padre siempre le demuestra respeto y admiración por los esfuerzos que hace para ser independiente, será un niño que en el futuro se desarrollará bien.

Los Niños Preescolares

El preescolar es más verbal y entiende mejor lo que se está diciendo sobre su persona. También se da cuenta de la situaciones en que un adulto puede estar hablando de él. Por ejemplo, si un adulto entra a una sala de clases de la preescuela, todos los niños tratarán de acaparar su atención. A esa edad les comienza a importar lo que los adultos piensan de ellos. Además, cada uno quiere ser el centro de atención. Como resultado de este interés por ser reconocido por los adultos, el niño se vuelve más sensible a los comentarios sobre su persona. Quizás no siempre entienda las palabras porque los padres generalmente hablan en códigos delante de sus hijos. De igual manera él entiende que se está hablando acerca de su persona y puede no gustarle.

Algunas veces, los padres comenten el error de contarle a los demás sobre las necesidades y los deseos de su preescolar - antes de que el niño tenga la oportunidad de hacerlo él mismo. El niño necesita unos cuantos segundos para responder a las preguntas. Si los padres tratan siempre de hablar en esos momentos de silencio, el niño no aprenderá las habilidades necesarias para comunicarse - y por supuesto que aprenderá que, no vale la pena pensar antes de hablar'. Por otra parte, el niño podrá ofenderse si usted presume al decir que sabe lo que le pasa o lo que él quiere decir a los demás.

Otro factor que entra en juego aquí, es que el preescolar puede ser muy sensible a lo que usted comente a los demás sobre sus habilidades y debilidades. Ya se ha comenzado a dar cuenta de que no es bueno en todo, y le produce frustración que se lo digan. Además, el niño nunca debiera escuchar cuando usted lo juzga, porque tales comentarios pueden limitar aún más el sentido que tiene sobre lo que puede y lo que no puede hacer.

El preescolar se avergonzará sobre las historias que usted cuenta a los demás, como el tener una cobija favorita o chuparse el dedo. En esta etapa el niño puede ser más sensible a los gestos de desconfianza que cuando era más pequeño. Un ejemplo de esto puede ser cuando usted le arrebata el jugo de naranjas antes de que él se lo sirva, o le dice de manera impaciente, "Déjame hacerlo. Yo me haré cargo," como si no tuviera confianza en sus habilidades.

El preescolar puede que sea más sensible de lo que usted se imagina cuando en voz alta, se lo compara con su hermano, especialmente con el mayor. De hecho, quizás sólo sea

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necesario motivarlo a que haga lo mismo que hacía su hermano a esa edad. Una madre que conocí, cuyo hijo aprendió el abecedario a una edad muy temprana, comenzó a hablar de esto con su otro hijo a la misma edad. Pero el niño menor no estaba interesado. " Oh", dijo inocentemente, "A Matthew le encantaba decir las letras cuando tenía tu edad!" y su hijo le respondió, "¡Yo no Matthew!"

Errores que cometen los padres

• *Catalogar o calificar al niño en forma negativa*. Cualquier calificación negativa, si se aplica con frecuencia, puede hacerse realidad a la larga. Comentarle enojadamente a su esposo o a su amiga, que el niño es un vago, torpe, un busca-problemas, o que es un patán, puede garantizarle casi con certeza que el niño empezará a pensar que él es así, especialmente si antes del calificativo dice, "Siempre eres tan..."

• *Alabar en forma excesiva o fanfarronear*. Recuerdo a un niño que conocí. Sus padres destacaron excesivamente un poema que escribió. Hablaron durante días de ello, le hicieron copias al poema y se lo mandaron a sus amigos y familiares. Hasta lo enviaron al periódico local. El niño nunca más escribió otro poema, aparentemente pensando que nunca más podría escribir uno que cumpliera con las expectativas de sus padres.

• *Hablar sobre los problemas y las debilidades del niño como si no estuviera presente, cuando en realidad está en el mismo cuarto*. Cuando está conversando sobre un problema de su hijo con una amiga, está molesta y realmente necesita contarle a alguien, pero se olvida de que su hijo también puede estar molesto. Aunque esté comentando que su profesora dice que nunca pone atención, o que todavía se orina en la cama, usted da a conocer alguno de sus secretos y de repente su hijo dice, "Mamá!" y protesta antes de salir llorando de la habitación.

Esta es una situación muy dolorosa para su hijo. Todos merecemos que nuestros asuntos privados se mantengan en privado. Situaciones parecidas pueden producirle pánico al niño porque siente que no puede confiarle sus secretos.

• *Hacer comparaciones entre hermanos*. Nada enoja más a niños de cualquier edad, que escuchar, "Tu hermano nunca hubiese hecho algo así," o "¿Por qué no puedes ser como tu hermana?" A veces los padres sólo desean hacer un bien y tratan de buscar cosas positivas para decirle a sus hijos, pero igual terminan causando problemas. Por ejemplo, el niño que en repetidas oportunidades escucha que es un artista, mientras que su hermano mayor es el intelectual, puede pensar que en lo académico no va a lograr nada y por lo tanto no debería intentarlo.

Los padres deberán tener cuidado y no comparar a los hijos cuando están en la misma habitación. Como consecuencia, el que sale perjudicado es humillado el doble porque su hermano o hermana estuvieron presentes para escuchar. Y el niño que fue alabado puede que experimente una mezcla entre alegría y culpabilidad por recibir elogios a expensas de su hermano.

• *Contar anécdotas sobre el niño o reírse de él*. No se puede pretender que el niño entienda chistes sobre su persona o que entienda que los adultos no tratan de reírse de ellos cuando las bromas tienen que ver con ellos. Decirle a un niño, "No me estoy riendo de ti, pero es que eres tan encantador," no alivia al niño ni le asegura de que usted está de su parte.

• *Quejarse sobre las dificultades de ser padres*. "Me está volviendo loca, lo único que quiero es que comience la escuela," dice una madre desesperada, mientras su hija la mira. Todos nosotros hacemos bromas sobre los desafíos que significa el ser padres. Pero si lo hace delante del niño puede que se sienta como una carga y piense que usted preferiría no tenerlo alrededor. Indudablemente, usted nunca querrá que su hijo le escuche decir algo parecido.

• *Decirle al niño que ha heredado los defectos del padre/madre*. "Eres igual que tu padre. Tu temperamento es atroz." En una familia en donde hay muchas peleas y los padres están a punto de divorciarse, es difícil no hacer este tipo de comentarios. Para los padres que recién se han divorciado, los niños son el recuerdo de alguien que les ha traído mucho dolor. Pero se debe tener cuidado en someter al niño a situaciones que realmente no le corresponden.

Nuevas Tácticas

El tema de las nuevas tácticas, descrito abajo, se basa en que usted debería tratar a su hijo con respeto y ver las cosas desde su punto de vista. Al hacer esto, le está diciendo que él merece su respeto como persona.

•*Táctica Nueva 1: Entréguele al niño comentarios positivos*. Estas afirmaciones son declaraciones que le dicen al niño que usted cree en él. Un hombre recordó que su padre una vez le dijo, " Hijo, tienes una buena cabeza sobre tus hombros. Vas a llegar lejos." A lo largo de su vida, las palabras del padre le dieron confianza cuando la necesitaba. Las afirmaciones no significan que usted espera que su hijo sea perfecto. Sólo dígale que usted piensa que es capaz y que es una persona competente tan solo por lo que es.

• *Táctica Nueva 2. Dígale a sus hijos que los acepta como seres valiosos y únicos dentro de la familia*. Dígale a cada niño, "Estoy muy contenta de que seas parte de esta familia." Deje en claro que su aceptación no es por su comportamiento en el escuela o como toca el piano, y que usted lo aprecia por su personalidad única, por su talento y por sus habilidades — aunque no sean igual que las suyas o que las de sus hermanos.

• *Táctica Nueva 3: Halague al niño en forma apropiada*. La clave para halagar de manera razonable es hacerlo cuando es merecido y apropiado. Discernir y halagar los verdaderos talentos del niño, aunque no estén dentro de lo que usted considera como éxito, es la clave para que su hijo se sienta bien consigo mismo.

• *Táctica Nueva 4: Criticar al niño sin sensibilidad*. Cuando le exprese al niño su descontento por algo que hizo, sea crítico sin ir demasiado lejos.

• *Táctica Nueva 5: No le ponga calificativos, analice el comportamiento que hay detrás*. En vez de decirle que es un vago, demuestre su enojo ante el desorden que tiene en su pieza. Si usted trabaja con él mientras limpia, no sentirá que lo están atacando, y la participación suya en la solucion del problema le dice que usted está de su parte.

Cuando comience con estas nuevas tácticas, se dará cuenta de que es mejor no hablar delante de su hijo en una forma que lo pueda lastimar.

Este artículo es una adaptación del Capítulo 10 de *"Not in Front of the Children...."* del Dr. Lawrence Balter. Viking Penguin, 1993. El Dr. Balter es profesor de Psicología Aplicada en la Universidad de Nueva York, editor adjunto y columnista de la revista *Ladies' Home Journal y de la Guía de Sesame Street para los Padres*. También es autor de libros y trabaja en radio y televisión.

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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 9 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *November 1995*

When parents and children get angry . . .

A typical morning scene:
It's almost time to leave the house to drop Daddy at the train station and Jeffrey at preschool before Mom goes to her office — but Jeffrey refuses to get dressed. "Hurry Jeffrey or we'll make Daddy miss his train, and you and I will both be late," says Mom. "I don't care," says Jeffrey who is still feeling sluggish, "I'm not ready to get dressed." "Yes you are!" shouts Mom. "No I'm not," he shouts back. And so it goes...their voices getting louder and louder. "You're a bad Mommy...I hate you!" yells this now out-of-control 4 year old, "How dare you speak to me like that!" retorts his frustrated mother.

HURRY!! OR WE'LL ALL BE LATE!

Anger, a legitimate emotion
Anger is a legitimate emotion and yet it is probably the one which causes the most difficulty for parents — especially mothers. Let's examine why.

Traditionally, most of us were never taught how to deal with anger. Women, in particular were reared to think it 'unfeminine' to express their anger. "Be nice!" was the common admonition from our mothers! And so, we were made to feel guilty if we felt angry. Many people equate angry feelings with a destructive rather than a healthy emotion. But it is important to differentiate between *destructive* and *constructive* anger.

We generally treat anger in one of three ways: 1) deny and repress it only to have it surface in unhealthy ways at a later date; 2) vent it in destructive ways that may be hurtful to others or damaging to people and property; or 3) manage it in acceptable ways to solve problems, right a wrong, or motivate positive behavior.

Why children get angry and how they respond
From infancy on, children become angry for many reasons:

- their physical or emotional needs are not met
- they feel frustrated because they are unable to accomplish something and cannot put it into words
- they are denied something they want
- they are striving for independence and feel overly controlled
- they are frightened, feel abandoned or have been treated harshly (verbally or physically)

It is interesting to note that, for children, sadness and anger are closely associated. What an adult experiences as sadness may be felt and expressed as anger in a child. Children tend to get angry most easily when tired, ill, stressed or bored.

Children's response to anger depends upon their age and/or developmental stage as well as the physical situation and the persons involved. The youngest will typically bite, cry, scream, pout, kick, yell, or all of the above (a full blown temper tantrum). As they reach 4 and 5, their anger may be expressed by sulking or pouting or the use of angry words. In fact, getting youngsters to use words instead of physical outbursts is the goal of most early childhood educators. Most parents have heard expressions such as, "You're a doody-head." "I hate you." "I wish you were dead." (Occasionally a precocious 4 -6 year old comes out with appropriately timed 'adult' four letter words to everyone's chagrin.) More than likely, expressions of anger occur where children feel safest: at home, in the presence of parents, or at an early childhood program where they feel very comfortable.

Why parents get angry at their children and how they respond
Adults usually believe that they can, or are supposed to, control children. Nothing is more frustrating to parents than a disobedient or defiant child over whom they seem to have no control. Sometimes parents can tolerate the whining, the accidents, the excessive noise and mess. But often the failure to cooperate,

In This Issue: Ways Parents can Prevent Confrontations...2; Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

continued >>>>>

the lack of appreciation, the battle of wills or out-of-bounds behavior is more than parents can bear. The resulting sense of utter helplessness and humiliation makes parents feel they have 'done something wrong.'

When *parents* are tired, ill, stressed or bored, the problem is compounded and reactions are less controlled. Parents yell, scream, threaten, punish, scold, hit, isolate, deprive. While it may temporarily stop a child's negative behavior and/or make a parent feel better, a constant diet of such out-of-bounds behavior on the part of adults will not likely have a positive impact and may, in fact, cause long-lasting negative results. It is generally accepted that children who have been harshly treated at home are most likely to become the bullies of the school yard and punitive parents to their own offspring.

Parenting is probably the most difficult job any adult can have. Children are unpredictable. The conflicts between children's needs and parents' needs are universal and never-ending. There are no easy answers...and even the most capable parents must deal with troublesome events and misbehavior. But the way parents react to such situations determines whether or not their children will learn positive ways to express their anger and become self-controlled individuals. It is important to understand that discipline is a long term learning process by which children adopt their parent's values and attitudes and develop the inner controls so desperately needed to become well-functioning adults. The manner in which parents speak to — and listen to — their children is a critical part of this process.

Author Toni H. Liebman, M.S., a former preschool director, is a Consultant who leads staff and parent seminars at Early Childhood Centers and Corporations. She is also the author of several P&p issues as well as the Teacher Resource Guide: *Classroom Management: Creating a Harmonious Environment*, Preschool Publications, 1992.

WE DON'T HURT EACH OTHER

Ways for parents to prevent angry confrontations

Be a good detective: Read your child's signals so that you know when he/she is tired, ill, bored, sad, or frustrated. Behavior gives the clues to what a child is thinking and feeling, especially in very young children. Even older children cannot always put their feelings into words.

Be accepting of your child's thoughts and feelings: No one can, or should, control what another person, including a child, is thinking or feeling even when those thoughts or feelings seem 'foolish,' 'childish,' or 'inappropriate.' A child must not only be allowed to express feelings, but encouraged to do so! In the incident mentioned on page 1 when Jeffrey refused to get dressed, his mother could have said, *"I know you would rather not get dressed right now — but we have to leave for the station or we'll all be late. I'll help you so you can do it faster."*

Other examples are: Michael is shopping with his mother and demands that she buy several toys he had seen advertised on TV. His mother could say, *"I know you would like to buy all those toys, but we don't have enough money right now. When we get home we'll write them on your wish list. Then we can choose what to buy you for your birthday."*

Aisha is having an argument with her younger sister. Her father sees Aisha making a fist and gently stops her and says, *"It looks like you are very angry with your sister right now, but I can't let you hit her....that hurts, and we don't hurt each other."*

Be positive: Tell children what they can do: praise them for their efforts. Instead of *"Stop bouncing that ball in the house,"* offer an option: *" The ball can be bounced outside, but not inside."* Catch a child doing something good: *"You're doing a great job putting your toys* away...or *dressing yourself*...or *setting the table."*

Instead of getting angry when your child misbehaves — try these strategies.

Treat a 'mistake' as a chance to learn: *"Looks like you forgot the rules about not playing ball in* the *house. Please try to remember next time."*

Show faith in his/her ability to improve: *"I see you don't feel like sharing that bike right now, but I'm sure you'll be ready to share in a little while. Please let Ericka know when it's her turn."*

Provide logical consequences
Consequences should be:
1) In proportion to the behavior — not every deed is a major offense.
2) Related to the behavior — removing crayons for a while has more to do with learning not to crayon on the walls than denial of TV.
3) As soon as possible after the incident so that the child connects the consequences to the behavior.

Speak as calmly as possible. Let the child know why you are angry: Choose words which focus on the *behavior*, not the child as a person. *"I don't like it when you spill your milk on the floor; it makes a mess,"* rather than *"You bad girl, you always spill your milk on the floor. You're so messy"*

Be willing to admit a mistake
Reassess what might be unrealistic expectations on your part and tell your child if you've made a mistake. For example: "Jane, I'm sorry that the bag of groceries fell on the floor. I didn't realize that it was too heavy for you to carry."

What to do when you start to feel really angry at your child
Calm down...and, depending upon how angry you are:
- Take a deep breath and remember, you are the adult.
- Count to 10...or 100.
- Think through the alphabet...forward...backward.
- Remove yourself from the situation...take a "Time Out!" Splash some water on your face; take a bath; hug a pillow.

continued >>>>>

Listen to your favorite music.

- Try to think clearly, "What is happening here...do I know what actually happened?"
- "What am I *really* angry about...my child's behavior, or something larger?" "Will I be sorry if I take a particular course of action?" *'No trip to the beach tomorrow'* may punish you as well as your child...and by tomorrow, she may forget why she's being punished.
- Be willing to apologize. Say, *"I'm sorry"* about words used or action taken in the heat of your anger.

What not to do when you start to feel really angry at your child

Don't inhibit your child's angry feelings by ignoring, denying, or punishing them. Ineffective responses are: "How *dare you talk to me like that." "I never want to hear you say those things again." "I'm going to spank you if you ever get this angry again."* Instead find out why he/she is so angry...and try to help solve the problem.

Don't take it personally when your child argues, talks back or refuses to do something. Children have always balked at parents' authority...it is quite normal that they do not want to do everything asked of them. Sometimes they are just trying to assert their independence. However, parents also have a right to assert their authority as long as they are fair and considerate, and have expectations that are appropriate to the age of their child.

Don't problem solve or set a punishment in the heat of anger: *"We'll have to discuss this in a few minutes when I'm not so angry,"* may be better than jumping to a conclusion immediately.

Children can learn to understand the dangers of repressing their angry feelings and the importance of learning to express them in constructive ways if parents are good role models in this area. Parents can learn to accept their child's anger as a natural emotion which, if expressed in socially acceptable ways, can lead to a healthier life.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

Love and Discipline, by Barbara Brenner. Ballantine Books, 1983.

Your Child's Self Esteem, by , Dorothy C. Briggs. Dolphin Books, 1975.

Parents, Please Don't Sit on your Kids, by Clare Cherry. Pitman, 1985.

Without Spanking or Spoiling, by Elizabeth Crary. 2nd ed., Parenting Press, 1992.

The Dance of Anger, by Harriet G. Lerner, Ph.D. Harper & Row, 1985.

Love and Anger, by Nancy Samalin. Viking, 1991.

The Difficult Child, by Stanley Turecki, M.D. Bantam Books, 1985.

Weisinqer's Anger Workout Book, by Dr. Hendrie Weisinger . Quill Publishers, 1985.

Discipline without Shouting or Spanking, by Jerry Wyckoff & Barbara Unell. Meadowbrook Press, 1984.

Pamphlets

Love and Learn: Discipline for Young Children NAEYC, 1986
Helping Young Children Learn Self-Control NAEYC, 1988
Both can be obtained by sending 50¢ each to: NAEYC 1509 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-1426

How to Teach Your Children Discipline, by Marilyn E. Gootman
Would you Like to Wear the Red Socks or Blue Socks?
Both can be obtained by writing to: National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, 200 State Rd., So. Deerfield, MA 01373-0200

Quick Tips for Parents on Listening-Cooperation-Punishment. Nat'l. Committee to Prevent Child Abuse (NY State Chapter) 134 South Swan Street, Albany, NY 12210 (1-800-342-7472)

Vaccinate Your Infant Against the "Terrible Twos," by Dr. Michael K. Meyerhoff. A step-by-step behavior management plan for preventing temper tantrums and other serious discipline problems during toddlerhood and the preschool years. Send $3.95 to: The Epicenter Inc., PO Box 81326, Wellesley Hills MA 02181.

Books for Children about Feelings

What Makes Me Happy? by Catherine and Laurence Anholt. Candlewick Press, 1995. In rollicking rhyme, this charming book explores the feelings of young children, including happiness, sadness, excitement, and anger.

Paddington's Things I Feel, by Michael Bond. HarperFestival, 1994. Through the day at a Fun Fair, Paddington Bear experiences a variety of feelings: when he wakes to go to the fair, he's excited; when he rides the roller coaster, he's scared; when he sees himself in the fun mirror, he's surprised. And when he has to leave, he's sad.

Bobby and the Brockles, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. Avon Books, 1994. Designed for parents and children to read together, this book teaches a gentle message about dealing with anger. The Brockles are two tiny visitors from another planet who explain to Bobby how problems can disappear when you talk them over instead of screaming and demanding your way. The authors wrote the best selling book, ***How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk.***

Sam's Worries, by Maryann Macdonald. Hyperion, 1990. Sam can't get to sleep because he's so worried. He's worried that there might be a volcano under his house, that there are cobras in his garage, and that the lunchroom lady is a witch. His mom reassures him, but it doesn't help. Only his teddy bear understands, and as bear takes over the worrying for Sam, the little boy can drift away to sleep.

Say Hello, Tilly! by Wendy Smith. Bantam Little Rooster, 1990. Tilly doesn't like parties because she's so shy. So when Benny invites her, she sits on the sidelines, feeling bashful and sad. Then she is introduced to Pablo, who just arrived from Spain and has no one to talk to. Tilly finds her voice, and makes a new friend as well.

Frog Is Frightened, by Max Velthuijs. Tambourine, 1994. A simple tale about four friends: frog, duck, pig, and hare, who come to realize that everyone gets frightened sometimes.

My Wish For Tomorrow: *Words And Pictures From Children Around The World.* Tambourine, 1995. "If you were granted one wish to make the world a better place, what would it be?" To help celebrate the 50th birthday of the United Nations, the UN and Jim Henson Productions asked children from every part of the world that question. Their answers and drawings make up this book.

Bibliography by
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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

What Are We Feeding Our Kids?

Are they eating too much fat? How much is too much? What and who are influencing the way they eat? Are there guidelines specifically for preschoolers? How can we guide them to a healthier diet?

If you have asked yourself any or all of these questions you will be interested in reading the book entitled, *What Are We Feeding Our Kids?*, by Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D. and Bruce Maxwell, (Workman Publishing, 1994). Jacobson, Executive Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, and Maxwell use studies, statistics and nutrition information to examine food issues and educate parents and caregivers.

The book's premise is that children are eating more snacks, are eating more away from home, and are making choices about what foods to buy. Also, that children don't know about nutrition, and don't understand why they should eat nutritious foods.

Did You Know?

..."Manufacturers add nearly 3000 chemicals to our food during processing."

..."Arteriosclerosis [clogging of the arteries] can appear in the arteries of children as young as age 3."

..."An NCI [National Cancer Institute] study found that at least one in four children in elementary and high school does not even eat one serving of vegetables (not counting French fries) per day."

..."one out of six 10 year olds skipped breakfast, and that many of those who ate at home had dined on cake, colas, or other junk food."

Fat Intake and Guidelines

American adults and children eat too much fat. (Parents of preschoolers need to be cautioned that they should NOT limit the fat intake of children age 2 and under. Breast milk is high in fat.) Whole milk should be fed to children ages 1-2, along with other nutritious foods such as grains, cheeses, fruit and vegetables.

Guidelines recommend 30% of daily calories should come from fat. Since the average calorie intake per day for a 2-3 year old is 1300 calories, then 43 grams of fat would be the maximum fat intake. For preschoolers, ages 4-6, the daily intake is 1800 calories of which 60 grams of fat would be the maximum allowed.

Nutrition labeling now shows how many grams of fat are in a serving. By reading the nutrition part of the label, and by using a nutrition chart, you would be able to add up how many grams of fat your preschooler was consuming. Serving more whole grains and less meat might be one adjustment you could make to reach the goal of 30% fat per day for preschoolers older than age 2.

Who is Influencing My Child's Eating?

Television commercials are a big influence. Even if you limit the time your preschooler watches commercial TV he will probably be exposed to food commercials that show children performing well in sports, or making new friends because of eating a food product. Be prepared for TV-related requests when you go grocery shopping. Look at the label and decide if this is really what you want your child to be eating.

Have you noticed that "Kid's Clubs" are just another marketing device for food companies to promote their products? It's not necessarily wrong to make these choices, as long as you are aware of the choices you and your family are making.

If your preschooler goes to a day care center or eats at preschool, what is being served and how her peers eat is a steady influence on your youngster. Some questions you might ask are:

- "Does the center participate in and receive a subsidy from the federal Child Care Food Program?"
- "Do the meals have a variety of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and lean meat, poultry and fish?"
- "Are children offered choices at meals?"
- "Does the staff eat with the children?"
- "Are children exposed to ethnic foods and the accompanying cultures?"

Eating Healthier Foods

Some of the strategies offered by Jacobson and Maxwell are :

- serve vegetables raw rather than cooked
- serve vegetables as a first course, when appetites are best
- cook vegetables lightly by steaming or microwaving to preserve texture and nutrients

When eating out:

- avoid breaded or fried foods
- remove skin from the chicken
- encourage eating at a salad bar
- avoid meat high in fat and sodium, such as pepperoni on your pizza
- at a baked potato bar, take care the toppings are low in fat — bacon and sour cream topping will defeat the purpose of a "healthy" meal.

One last strategy: "include your child in the cooking"! Here he will learn what foods to combine to make a healthy meal. Best wishes in guiding your family to a healthier eating pattern.

Resource: Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 300 Wash., DC 20009-5728

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies and back issues on request.)

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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
one year...US$38.00
two year..........72.00
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**All other countries add postage**
US$12 for 1 year
US$24 for 2 years
US$36 for 3 years

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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de noviembre, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 9) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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Cuando padres e hijos se enojan...

Una tipica escena de mañana: *Es casi hora de salir de casa, a dejar a papá en la estación del tren y a Jeffrey en la preescuela antes de que mamá vaya a la oficina—pero Jeffrey se niega a vestirse. "Apúrate Jeffrey o haremos que papá pierda el tren y tú y yo llegaremos tarde," dice mamá. "No me importa," dice Jeffrey, que aún se siente sin ánimo, "No estoy listo para vestirme." "¡Sí lo estás!" grita mamá. "No lo estoy," le contesta. Y sigue así... sus tonos de voz aumentando cada vez más. "¡Eres una mamá mala...te odio!" grita este pequeño de 4 años que ya está fuero de control. "¡Cómo te atreves a hablarme así!" responde su frustrada madre.*

La ira, una emoción legítima

La ira es una emoción legítima y sin embargo, es la que más dificultad le produce a los padres—en especial a las madres. Veamos por qué.

Tradicionalmente, a la mayoría de nosotros nunca se nos enseñó a tratar con la ira. A las mujeres, en especial, se les inculcó que "no era femenino" expresar su ira. "¡Sea simpática!" era el reproche común que provenía de nuestras madres. Y por lo tanto, se nos infundió sentir culpa si nos daba ira. Muchas personas asimilan los sentimientos de ira con una emoción destructiva en vez de ser algo saludable. Pero es importante diferenciar entre la ira *destructiva* y la *constructiva*.

Por lo general tratamos la ira de una de tres maneras: 1) La negamos y reprimimos sólo para que en otra ocasión salga a flote de una manera poco saludable; 2) Ventilarla en formas destructivas que pueden herir a otros y causar daño a personas o propiedad; o 3) Manejarla de formas aceptables para solucionar problemas, corregir un mal o motivar un comportamiento positivo.

Por qué se enojan los niños y cómo reaccionan

A partir de la infancia, los niños se enojan por muchas razones:

- Sus necesidades físicas o emocionales no son satisfechas
- Se sienten frustrados por no ser capaces de lograr algo y no poder expresarlo por medio de palabras
- Se les niega algo que desean
- Luchan por ser independientes y se sienten extremadamente controlados
- Tienen miedo, se sienten abandonados o han recibido un trato brusco (verbal o físico).

Es interesante destacar que para los niños, la tristeza y la ira están estrechamente ligadas. Lo que un adulto experimenta como tristeza, un niño puede sentirlo como ira. Los niños tienden a enojarse con mayor facilidad cuando están cansados, enfermos, estresados o aburridos.

La respuesta de los niños a la ira depende de su edad y/o etapa de desarrollo, así como de la situación física y las personas involucradas. Los más pequeños por lo general muerden, lloran, gritan, hacen pucheros, patean o todas las anteriores a la vez (una completa rabieta de temperamento). A medida que llegan a los 4 y 5 años, su ira podrá expresarse con lamentos o pucheros o con el uso de palabras de enojo. De hecho, lograr que los pequeños utilicen palabras en vez de arrebatos físicos es una de las metas de la mayoría de los educadores de preescolares. La mayoría de los padres han escuchado expresiones como, "Eres un tonto," "Te odio," "Ojalá estuvieras muerto." (En ocasiones un pequeño de 4 a 6 años sale con palabras obscenas en el momento adecuado, para sorpresa de todos.) Por lo general, las expresiones de enojo ocurren donde los niños se sienten más seguros: en casa, delante de los padres o en cualquier programa infantil donde se sientan cómodos.

Por qué se enojan los padres con sus hijos y cómo reaccionan

Por lo general los adultos creen que pueden o deben controlar a los hijos. No hay nada más frustrante para los padres que un hijo desobediente o desafiante, sobre el que al parecer no ejercen control alguno. Algunas veces los padres pueden tolerar los lamentos, los accidentes, el ruido excesivo y el desorden. Pero con frecuencia la falta de colaboración, la desconsideración, la batalla contra la voluntad o el comportamiento inadecuado es más de lo que los padres pueden soportar. Como resultado, el sentimiento de impotencia y humillación hace que los padres sientan que han "hecho algo mal".

Cuando los padres están cansados, enfermos, estresados o aburridos, el problema se agrava y se controlan menos las reacciones. Los padres gritan, amenazan, castigan, regañan, golpean, aíslan y cohíben. Mientras que estas reacciones podrán acabar temporalmente con el comportamiento negativo de un niño y/o hacer que el padre se sienta mejor, una constante dieta de este tipo de comportamientos inadecuados por parte de los adultos lo más seguro es que tenga un impacto negativo. De hecho, podría causar resultados negativos que permanezcan en el tiempo. En general es bastante aceptado el hecho que los niños que han sido maltratados en casa tienden a convertirse en niños violentos en la escuela y sean padres punitivos con sus propios hijos.

Ser padre es probablemente el trabajo más difícil que cualquier adulto pueda tener. Los niños son inpredecibles. Los conflictos entre las necesidades de los hijos y las necesidades de los padres son universales e interminables. No hay respuestas sencillas...y hasta el padre o madre más preparada debe enfrentarse con hechos problemáticos y mal comportamiento. Pero las formas en que los padres reaccionan a estas situaciones determina si el niño aprenderá o no maneras positivas para expresar su ira y convertirse en un individuo con autocontrol. Es importante entender que la disciplina es un proceso de aprendizaje a largo plazo por el cual los niños adoptan los valores y actitudes de los padres, y desarrollan los controles internos que tanto se necesitan para ser adultos que se manejan bien. La manera en que los padres hablan—y escuchan a—sus hijos es una parte crucial de este proceso.

La autora Toni H. Liebman, M.S., ex directora de una escuela preescolar, es asesora y conferencista de seminarios para padres y personas relacionadas con la educación en Early Childhood Centers and Corporations. También escribió sobre varios temas publicados en **P&p** al igual que en el Teachers Resource Guide: ***Classroom Management: Creating a Harmonious Environment,*** Preschool Publications, 1992.

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Formas en que los padres pueden evitar confrontaciones de ira

Sea un buen detective: Lea las señales que le da su hijo para que sepa cuando está cansado, enfermo, aburrido, triste o frustrado. El comportamiento da pistas de lo que un niño está pensando y sintiendo, en especial en niños muy pequeños. Incluso los niños de mayor edad no pueden expresar siempre sus sentimientos con palabras.

Sea comprensivo con los pensamientos y sentimientos de su hijo: Nadie puede o debe controlar lo que otro, incluso un niño, piensa o siente, aún cuando esos pensamientos o sentimientos parezcan 'tontos,' 'infantiles,' o 'inadecuados.' ¡A un niño no sólo se le debe permitir expresar sentimientos, sino que se le debe motivar a hacerlo! En el incidente mencionado en la primera página, cuando Jeffrey se negó a vestirse, su madre pudo haber dicho, *"Se que preferirías no vestirte ahora — pero tenemos que irnos a la estación o llegaremos tarde. Te ayudaré para que lo puedas hacer más rápido."*

Otros ejemplos son: Michael está de compras con su madre y exige que ella le compre varios juguetes que había visto en televisión. Su madre podría decir, *"Se que te gustaría comprar todos esos juguetes pero no tenemos suficiente dinero en este momento. Cuando lleguemos a casa los pondremos en tu lista de deseos. Luego podemos decidir qué comprar para tu cumpleaños."*

Aisha está discutiendo con su hermana menor. Su padre ve a Aisha empuñando la mano y con delicadeza la detiene y dice, *"Parece que estás muy enojada con tu hermana pero no puedo permitir que le pegues...eso duele y no queremos hacernos daño."*

Sea positiva: Diga a los niños lo que sí pueden hacer: elogie sus esfuerzos. En vez de *"Deja de jugar con esa pelota en la casa,"* ofrezca una opción: *"Se puede jugar con la pelota, pero no adentro."* Sorprenda a un niño haciendo algo bueno: *"Estás haciendo un buen trabajo al guardar tus juguetes...o vistiéndote...o preparando la mesa".*

En vez de enojarse cuando su hijo no se comporta bien - ensaye estas estrategias.

Trate un 'error' como una oportunidad para aprender: *"Parece que se te olvidaron las reglas de no jugar en la casa. Por favor trata de recordarlo la próxima vez."*

Demuestre fe en su capacidad de mejorar: *"Veo que en este momento no tienes ganas de compartir la bicicleta pero estoy seguro de que estarás listo para compartirla después.. Por favor avísale a Eric cuando sea su turno."*

Utilice consecuencias lógicas (los niños pueden contribuir en este proceso)
Las consecuencias deben:
1) Ser proporcionales al comportamiento - cada acción no es una gran ofensa.
2) Estar relacionadas con el comportamiento - quitarle los lápices de colores por un tiempo tiene más que ver con aprender a no rayar las paredes que privarlo de la televisión.
3) Producirse lo más pronto sea posible después del incidente para que el niño asocie las consecuencias con un determinado comportamiento.

Hable lo más calmadamente posible. Déjele saber al niño porqué está enojada: Escoja palabras que se centren en el *comportamiento,* y no en el niño como persona. Dígale: *"No me gusta cuando derramas la leche en el suelo, queda un desorden,"*, y no *"Eres una mala niña, siempre derramas tu leche en el suelo."*

Esté dispuesta a reconocer un error
Vuelva a evaluar lo que podrían ser expectativas poco realistas de su parte y dígale a su hijo que usted cometió un error. Por ejemplo, "Jake, siento que esa bolsa con compras se haya caído al suelo. No me di cuenta de que era muy pesada para ti."

Qué hacer cuando usted comienza a enojarse con su hijo

Cálmese...y dependiendo de lo enojado que esté:

- Respire profundo y recuerde que usted es el adulto.
- Cuente hasta 10...o 100
- Repita mentalmente el abecedario...al derecho y al revés.
- Retírese de la situación...tómese un "¡tiempo!" mójese la cara, tome una ducha, aférrese una almohada. Escuche su música favorita.
- Trate de pensar con claridad, "¿Qué es lo que pasa aquí...sé bien lo que ocurrió?
- "¿Por qué estoy enojada...es el comportamiento de mi hijo o algo peor?" "¿Me arrepentiré de lo que haga?" *'No habrá paseo a la playa mañana'* puede castigarla a usted tanto como a su hijo...y de aquí a mañana se le podría olvidar la razón del castigo.
- Esté dispuesto a pedir disculpas. Diga, "perdóname" por las palabras o acciones que utilicé cuando te enojaste.

Lo que no se debe hacer cuando comienza a sentir ira de verdad con su hijo

No reprima los sentimientos de ira de su hijo no haciéndole caso, cohibiéndolo o castigándolo. Repuestas que no dan resultado son: *"¿Cómo te atreves a hablarme así? "Jamás quiero volver a escuchar esas cosas."* Por el contrario, averigüe por qué está tan enojado...y trate de ayudarlo a resolver el problema.

No lo tome a manera personal cuando su hijo discuta, conteste o se niega a hacer algo. Los hijos siempre rechazan la autoridad de los padres...es normal que ellos no quieran hacer todo lo que se les pide. Algunas veces ellos sólo intentan determinar su independencia. Sin embargo, los padres también tiene derecho a reafirmar su autoridad siempre y cuando sean justos y considerados y tengan expectativas proporcionales a la edad de sus hijos.

No solucione problemas o determine un castigo en medio del furor de la discusión: *"Tendremos que discutirlo en unos minutos cuando no esté tan enojada,"* podría ser mejor que tomar una decisión apresurada.

Si los padres son un buen ejemplo en este aspecto, los niños podrán entender los peligros que existen al reprimir sentimientos de ira y la importancia de aprender a expresarlos de manera constructiva. En vez de estar a la defensiva o sentirse amenazada por la ira de su hijo, aprenda a aceptar que esta es una emoción natural que si se expresa de maneras socialmente aceptables, puede conducir a una vida más sana.

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *December 1995*

A recipe for growing happy children. . .

There's an old 1940s song with a terrific message for growing happy children — "You've got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative...." This simple philosophy can sometimes be difficult to carry out when the normal frustrations and time constraints of raising children come into play. But, parents who make the effort to retain a positive focus by providing a warm and nurturing environment are more likely to have their children blossom into happy, well-adjusted persons.

Start with realistic expectations

Every family has certain limits, but it's important to keep your expectations appropriate to the child's age and ability. Diane, a mother of a 3-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son wastes a lot of time and energy trying to keep her young children 'in line.' Because of past encounters with what she refers to as 'spoiled children,' Diane is determined to raise well-behaved children. A few of Diane's expectations are:

- Children must remain at the dinner table throughout the entire meal.
- Children must answer all instructions with "Yes, mommy."
- Children must not climb all over Diane when she gets home from work.

Any variation from these rules results in the children being reprimanded, given a time-out or a spanking, depending on Diane's mood and the severity of the offense. When the children conform to her 'rules' they are seldom praised or rewarded. As a result, Diane has set up a negative parenting style which has placed her family in a frustrating cycle of punishment. Diane, often feeling out of control, can't understand why her 3-year-old daughter is acting out with excessive tantrums. Unfortunately, her children get so little attention by pleasing her that they've learned to how to command attention by misbehaving. Diane feels like an inadequate parent when in fact her expectations far exceed the developmental abilities of her young children.

In This Issue: 20 Things You Can Do Today...2; Preschooler in the Kitchen...3; Library Resources...4

Resolve issues through communication first

Even young children comprehend a great deal more than many adults give them credit for. A lot can be accomplished by simply conveying realistic expectations to a child before problems arise. Janine, the mother of a five year old was constantly at odds with her son Conrad over one issue. Conrad's only job each morning was to make his bed, but for some reason, despite his numerous attempts the bed was always in disarray. At wits end, Janine finally sat down with her son and together they discussed the issue. Conrad admitted to his mom that he didn't know how to make the bed. Once she patiently showed him what to do, the problem was solved.

Use positive approaches when discipline is necessary

Discipline is a misunderstood concept. The term discipline is derived from the word *disciple* which means, "one who receives instruction from another; a pupil." In these formative years, parents have the ultimate responsibility of teaching children what is acceptable behavior and what is not. There are four basic steps to disciplining a child while maintaining a positive focus.

1. Choose your battles wisely. Once you've established which issues are important to you, inform your child why these boundaries are needed as they come up. If, for example, it's

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important to you that your child not jump on the furniture, use specific reminders and offer alternatives. As your child begins to climb on the sofa, walk up to him (as opposed to yelling from across the room) and get down on his eye-level. "Furniture is not for jumping on. If you feel like jumping, you can go outside and jump off the back step."

2. Give a warning. It's appropriate to give a preschool-aged child one clear warning on a minor transgression. "Remember, I told you furniture is not for jumping? If you jump on the sofa again, I'll need you to go to sit on the stairs for 3 minutes." Inform the child exactly what will happen if he disobeys again.

3. Follow through. If and when a child deliberately crosses the line, act swiftly and initiate the consequence. Remind the child that each time he jumps on the sofa, he'll need to go to back on the stairs. Then interest him in an acceptable activity. After the issue is over avoid dwelling on it; move on.

4. Use praise as a reward. When you see your child make a conscious decision to follow a rule you've set forth, delight him with a hug and a big dose of positive reinforcement, "You remembered to pick up your toys — I knew you could do it!" This response will get you the results you want more quickly than scolding, punishing, or reprimanding. Following this type of format consistently will teach the child that your rules need to be followed. The child also learns that gratifying attention is received when he follows the rules and that, by itself, is a terrific incentive.

The positive approach takes practice

Accentuating the positive is more a *way of life* than a parenting technique. It involves taking the time to recognize and acknowledge the ordinary *and* extraordinary things children do everyday. It takes a bit of our time and attention to "catch them being good" but with practice it gets much easier. By accentuating the positive, children begin to feel cherished simply because of who they are, not what they do. If a seed is planted into the ground and given no nourishment it cannot bloom. On the other hand, take a child, drench with love, shower with attention and sprinkle with regular doses of positive messages. You'll be helping your child grow into a confident, warm-hearted, unique person.

Katrina Katarelis is a free-lance writer and mother of two children. She writes a newspaper column about raising young children called, "Watching them Grow."

Growing happy children
20 things you can do today!

1. Greet your child with a hug and a kiss each time you come home.
2. Notice at least three small things each day that your child does RIGHT. Tell the child about it.
3. Start a journal about your child. Write down comical sayings or memorable events in your child's life as they happen. Continue writing in it monthly until your child is an adult. Give it to your child for a graduation or wedding gift.
4. Read to your child. Start early with durable cardboard baby books and read as much as the child's attention level will allow. Visit the public library often. Most libraries encourage young readers with specially-designated children's areas and story hours.
5. Frame and display a piece of your child's artwork. Pick out a special drawing and put it in a picture frame. Hang it proudly in an obvious place and see how long it takes your child to notice. Let your child know how good it makes you feel when you look at that drawing.
6. Be honest. Answer questions honestly and appropriately for the child's age level. Also, if you make a promise, keep it. Children need the security of knowing their parents will always be truthful with them.
7. Appreciate nature. Point out the beauty in a rainbow, the wonderful smell of mountain air or the happy sounds of chirping birds. Soon your child will be pointing these things out to you.
8. Allow occasional messes. Some of the best learning experiences come in the form of a mess. Puddle stomping, fingerpainting, rolling in a pile of leaves or making shave cream sculptures create some of the sweetest childhood memories ever.
9. Give your child a little power. Offer choices and let your child make some small decisions. Forcing a child to do everything your way may someday backfire in a big way. Retain limits but be flexible on unimportant issues. Making little decisions today will help prepare your child to make serious decisions in the future.
10. Establish a Family Night. Set aside one day a week for creating closeness through outings together. Go to a movie, ice-skating or just stay home and play games. Let children help think of ideas for family night. This is a tradition children will remember for years to come.
11. Touch your child. Hold hands, stroke your child's hair, hug and kiss at will. Nothing expresses love more than a warm comfortable bear hug from mommy or daddy. Sadly, many adults can't remember ever being hugged or kissed as children. Don't let your child be one of them.
12. Minimize good and bad labels. Being told, "you're bad" repeatedly can damage a child's self-esteem. Instead, point out the actual *behavior* that bothers you. Conversely, instead of saying, "good boy / good girl" when your child does something right, try praising in specific ways, "I like the way you put your toys away."
13. Get along well with your spouse. Go on dates, communicate, resolve conflicts and be affectionate toward one other. One of the best gifts a parent can give is to be a positive role model for your child's future

continued >>>>>

relationships.

14. Be an example yourself. If you curse and swear, expect that your child will too. From the time they are infants, children learn almost everything from mimicry. Unfortunately, children can't disregard your negative traits and adopt only your positive ones.

15. Ask questions. What's your favorite color? What do you want to be when you grow up? What did you dream about last night? Let children know their thoughts and opinions are valued.

16. Play. Play. Play. Children learn a great deal through play. Get down on the floor and build blocks, play dress-up, make up silly stories or play board games. Let yourself go sometimes and just have fun together.

17. Have regular sit-down dinners. Studies show that families who eat a daily meal together form a better connection by keeping the lines of communication open. Keep mealtimes relaxed and encourage conversation by asking an open-ended question such as, "What was your favorite part of the day?"

18. Sing with your child. Whether or not you were blessed with the gift of song, a singing parent is a happy parent. Play, "Name that Tune" by taking turns humming a song until someone guesses correctly. Music b*rings* together the family who *sings* together.

19. Say "I love you". Your child may not really know it unless you say those three little words.

20. Respect your child. Show your child the same courtesy and respect you would a treasured friend. You can enforce limits without yelling, name-calling, or shaming. The respect demonstrated for your child now will be reflected in the way he treats others later.

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Have a Cookie-Baking or Exchange Party

With the winter holidays, everyone is busy! One way to get together with friends is by having a cookie-baking or exchange party. Either way you'll be getting part of the work done while having fun baking, or by sharing cookies you have already made in order to have a delicious variety.

A Cookie-Baking Party
Have the dough made beforehand. Plan for a Saturday or other day when you and other parents will be home to stay and help. The younger the preschooler, the more helping hands will be needed.

Use the cookie dough recipe below, or an old family favorite. Preschoolers will have the most fun with dough they can hold, mold, and decorate. You can choose a healthy vegetable or fruit based cookie, such as carrot drops or apple-raisin rumble, or decide to splurge with butter creams. Whatever you choose, be sure to send a bag home with each child who comes.

It's best to use a large flat surface, such as a kitchen table or coffee table covered with a plastic table cloth. Each item used for decorating the cookies can be placed in separate bowls in the center. Stable chairs or step stools bring small fingers to the right level, or preschoolers can sit on a parent's lap. Be sure little ones stay away from the oven. Multiple cookie sheets help, so hot ones can cool before preparing the next batch. Limit the activity time to under an hour, depending on the age of your preschooler.

After making the cookies, have drinks on hand for preschoolers and parent helpers. Feast on the finished product. Fresh fruits and cheeses can add to the snack, and extend the quantity of cookies tucked away for a special guest or holiday. Thank your guests for coming to help. If it turns out to be a good day and a good memory, you might make this activity into a family tradition.

A Cookie Exchange
A cookie exchange is a one in which each family brings several dozen cookies, and then exchanges or shares those cookies with the other families who attend. When many families come, you usually take home many types of cookies. The host or hostess of the party decides a set number of cookies to bring to be exchanged, such as six dozen.

Bake a favorite holiday cookie recipe with your preschooler a day or so before the cookie exchange date. You will need to bring two large containers, or one container and a tray. Containers of cookies are placed on a table, big enough to hold all the containers of cookies. A parent and preschooler stand by their container, holding a tray or extra container in hand. The host or hostess signals to start. Your preschooler can help you choose the cookies. Walk around the table, taking a cookie from each container until all the cookies are gone.

If you brought 6 dozen cookies, you will take home a variety of six dozen. Of course, you will be taking home some of your own cookies. What a lovely assortment you will have to share with your family and serve your guests!

Cookie Dough Favorites
This basic dough can be used to make two kinds of molded cookies, perfect for little fingers.

BASIC DOUGH
1/3 cup shortening
1/3 cup margarine
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 3/4 cup white or 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preschoolers can help measure and stir. Blend shortening, margarine and sugar. Add egg and vanilla. Stir in flour, baking powder, and salt. Refrigerate dough for later use, or use right away. Divide dough to make variations.

Variation #1 Sugar Cookies
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Use 1/2 of dough. On a floured surface, roll dough to 1/8-inch. Preschoolers can help cut with cookie-cutter, place on ungreased baking sheet and decorate with raisins, colored sugar or little candies. Bake about 6 minutes or until light brown. Yield: about 3 dozen.

Variation #2 Cinnamon Stars
In a cereal bowl, preschoolers can mix 2 teaspoons sugar and 2 teaspoons cinnamon; set aside. Use 1/2 of dough. Preschoolers can mold a rounded teaspoon of dough into a ball, then roll in cinnamon mixture. Place 2-inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes. Yield: about 2 dozen.

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LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

Celebrate Your Child: The Art of Happy Parenting, by Richard Carlson, Ph.D. New World Library (58 Paul Dr., San Rafael CA 94903), 1992. In chapters entitled: *Self-Esteem: The Foundation of Happiness, Looking for the Good, Cultivating a Grateful Attitude, etc.*, the author discusses how parents can become a mirror for their children, reflecting the positive, life-affirming messages children need for happy lives and healthy self-esteem.

Child-Wise, by Cathy Rindner Tempelsman. Quill/Wm. Morrow, 1994. To the author, Child-Wise means "making an effort to understand why behavior that's annoying or upsetting to us as parents makes sense to a young child." This valuable book offers practical suggestions based upon the best of what has been written about child development along with the wisdom of parents who have lived through the realities of child rearing.

Books for Children About the Self

The Candlewick Book of Bedtime Stories. Candlewick Press, 1995. Many favorite authors and illustrators contributed to this appealing collection of stories. You will find *Good Night, Lily,* by Martha Alexander, *Tom and Pippo's Day,* by Helen Oxenbury, and Martin Waddell's *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* among the 17 stories that will delight youngsters at bedtime.

Michael, by Tony Bradman. Macmillan, 1990. Michael is different. He doesn't do what he's told and his teachers say he will come to no good. But like many other unique personalities, Michael suddenly blossoms and astonishes them all.

Annie Flies the Birthday Bike, by Crescent Dragonwagon. Macmillan, 1993. Annie gets the bicycle she wanted for her birthday, but never realized how difficult it would be to learn to ride. The book is a touching chronicle of her trials and successes as she slowly masters the skill that is so important to her.

Josephina Hates Her Name, by Diana Engel. Morrow, 1989. Josephina can't understand why her family gave her such an ugly, old-fashioned and unusual name and wishes she could change it. She asks grandma why her parents named her Josephina. Grandma answers that she picked the name, and tells the story of her sister, Josephina, a brave and talented girl who went off to explore the jungle. The youngster is so impressed that she realizes that Josephina is a fine name after all.

Just My Size, by May Garelick. Harper & Row, 1990. In a story about growth and a treasured article of clothing, a girl remembers a beautiful blue coat that had been given to her when she was little. She loved the coat, so as she outgrew it, it was cut down to a jacket, then to a vest, then to a knapsack and finally to a doll's coat, a replica of the coat she wore many years before.

My Friends, by Taro Gomi. Chronicle, 1995. In a simple, brightly illustrated book, a little girl tells how her friends teach her the basic actions learned in life. She learns to jump from her friend the dog, sing from her friends the birds, read from her friends the books, and play from her friends at school.

Island Baby, by Holly Keller. Mulberry Books edition, 1994. This moving story about growing up and becoming independent is set in the Caribbean. Simon loves taking care of injured birds at Pop's hospital. He has a special friendship for the baby flamingo with a broken leg which he calls Baby. By the end of summer, Baby's leg is healed and Simon hears Pops saying the words that the little boy had been dreading, "I think it's about time to set Baby free." Simon will miss Baby but he lets him go, feeling proud that his Baby will be flying on its own.

Good Night! by Claire Masurel. Chronicle, 1995. In a little girl's nighttime ritual, she fluffs up the pillows and brushes her teeth. She gathers all of her bedtime friends: bear, rabbit, clown and all, and scolds them gently for wanting to stay up longer. Then at last everyone is tucked in and ready to sleep.

I Had a Lot of Wishes, by James Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1995. The famous author/illustrator tells with humor and understanding about the kinds of wishes he had when he was young: *wishes that something would happen; wishes that something would not happen; wishes that what was happening would stop...* Young children will relate to his wishes about his friends, family, school and camp, and they'll surely think of a few wishes of their own.

Where Is My Baby? *A Portfolio of Prints from the book* by Harriet Ziefert. HarperFestival, 1995. There are five whimsical prints by Simms Taback in this package, each depicting a loving mother animal and her baby. Suitable to frame or mount.

Over and Over, by Charlotte Zolotow. HarperTrophy, 1985. In this classic story, a mother explains to her little girl about time and the seasons. They look forward together to each special day that will come: Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and through the year to the little girl's birthday. She blows out the candles on her cake and makes a wish. She wishes for it to happen again. *"And of course it did, over and over."*

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
©1995 Preschool Publications, Inc.
**Printed in U.S.A.**

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two year..........52.00
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Parent and preschooler
Newsletter
En Español
A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de deciembre, edición del 1995 (volumne 10, número 10) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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Una receta para criar niños felices...

Hay una canción de los años cuarenta que tiene un gran mensaje para criar niños felices — "Tienes que acentuar lo positivo y eliminar lo negativo...." Esta simple filosofía puede ser difícil de poner en práctica cuando las frustraciones y la falta de tiempo intervienen en la crianza de los niños. Pero es probable que los padres que se esfuerzan por mantener una actitud positiva y un ambiente cálido y didáctico, ayuden a sus hijos a convertirse en personas felices y bien adaptadas.

Comience con expectativas realistas

Cada familia tiene ciertos límites, pero es importante mantener las expectativas de acuerdo a la edad y a las habilidades del niño. Diane, la madre de una niña de 3 años y un niño de 2, pierde mucho tiempo y energía tratando de mantener a sus hijos disciplinados. A raíz de haber conocido en el pasados a lo que ella denomina 'niños mimados,' Diane está decidida a criar niños bien educados. Algunas de las expectativas de Diane son:

- Los niños deben permanecer en la mesa hasta que la cena haya concluido.
- Los niños deben responder a todas las instrucciones con, "Sí mamá."
- Los niños no deben subirse encima de la madre cuando llega del trabajo.

Cualquier cambio en las reglas resulta en un regaño o en una palmada dependiendo del estado de ánimo de Diane y de la gravedad de la ofensa. Cuando los niños acatan sus reglas, casi nunca se los alaba o recompensa. Como consecuencia de esto, ella ha establecido un estilo de crianza que ha situado a su familia en un frustrante ciclo que siempre termina en castigo. Diane muchas veces se siente fuera de control y no logra entender porqué su hija tiene rabietas. Desafortunadamente, sus hijos reciben tan poca atención tratando de agradarla, que han aprendido a obtenerla por medio de la mala conducta. Ella se siente incapaz como madre, cuando la verdad es que sus hijos no se han desarrollado lo suficiente como para cumplir con sus altas expectativas.

Primero resuelva los problemas por medio de la comunicación

Los niños entienden mucho más de lo que sus padres piensan. Se puede lograr mucho simplemente comunicándole sus expectativas a los niños antes de que surjan problemas. Janine, madre de un niño de 5 años de edad, estaba constantemente molesta con su hijo Conrad sobre un asunto específico. La única tarea de Conrad era hacer su cama en la mañana, pero por algún motivo, siempre estaba en desorden. Finalmente, Janine se sentó son su hijo a conversaron sobre el problema. Conrad le confesó que no sabía hacer la cama y una vez que ella le enseñó a hacerla, el problema despareció.

Utilice estrategias positivos cuando la disciplina sea necesaria

La disciplina es un concepto malentendido. El término viene de la palabra *discipulo'* que significa, "Aquel que recibe instrucción de otro" osea, un pupilo. Durante los años formativos, el padre tiene la responsabilidad de enseñarle a los hijos sobre lo que es conducta aceptable y sobre lo que no es aceptable. Hay cuatro etapas básicas para disciplinar al niño manteniendo una actitud positiva.

1. Escoja sus batallas' con sabiduría. Una vez que usted haya determinado cuales asuntos le son un problema, explíquele al niño porqué es necesario establecer estos límites. Si, por ejemplo, es importante para usted que no salte encima de los muebles, recuérdeselo y ofrezcale alternativas. Cuando su hijo comience a subirse sobre el sofá, vaya donde él (al contrario de gritarle desde el otro lado de la habitación) y agáchese para quedar a su altura. "Los muebles no son para saltar encima. Si tienes ganas de saltar puedes hacerlo afuera."

2. Advertir. Es recomendable advertirle al niño en edad preescolar cuando comete alguna falta. "Recuerdas que te dije que no se saltaba encima de los muebles? Si lo haces otra vez tendré que llevarte afuera por tres minutos." Explique al niño lo que pasará si es que desobedece otra vez.

3. Llegue hasta el final. Si el niño comente faltas a propósito, actúe con rapidez y lleve a cabo las consecuencias. Recuérdele que cada vez que salte sobre el sofá tendrá que irse afuera. Luego haga que se interese en alguna actividad que sí sea aceptable. Una vez que el asunto se haya resuelto no se quede pegado en él, cambie de tema y siga adelante.

4. Utilice el elogio como recompensa. Cuando vea que el niño está haciendo un esfuerzo por cumplir las reglas que usted fijó, dele un abrazo y refuerzo positivamente la acción, "Recordaste recoger tus juguetes — yo sabía que lo podías hacer!" Una respuesta de éste tipo dará mejores resultados que cuando usa el regaño o el castigo. El usar este tipo de estrategias de manera consistente le enseñarán al niño a seguir sus reglas. Por otra parte, él aprenderá que la reacción positiva y gratificante llega cuando ha seguido las reglas, y esto es un excelente incentivo por sí solo.

Para tener una actitud positiva se requiere práctica

El acentuar lo positivo es más un forma de vida que una técnica de ser padres. Implica el tomarse el tiempo para reconocer y aceptar las cosas simples y las cosas extraordinarias que hacen los niños. Se requiere de tiempo y atención para "observarlos siendo buenos", pero con la práctica esto se vuelve más fácil. Al acentuar lo positivo, el niño comienza a sentirse satisfecho simplemente por lo que es y no por lo que hace. Si se siembra una semilla y no se riega, nunca va a brotar. Por otro lado, al niño hay que entregarle amor, dedicarle tiempo y atención, y estimularlo de manera positiva. De esta manera estará ayudando a que el niño crezca y se convierta en una persona única, segura y de buen corazón.

Katrina Katserelis trabaja como escritora independiente y es madre de dos niños. Escribe una columna periodística sobre como criar hijos llamada, "Watching them Grow."

continuará >>>>>>

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Criando niños felices: 20 cosas que puede hacer hoy!

1. Salude a su hijo con un abrazo y un beso cada vez que llegue a casa.

2. Observe cada día por lo menos tres cosas que él o ella hizo bien. Hágaselo saber.

3. Escriba un diario sobre su hijo o hija. Escriba las cosas divertidas que dice o sobre los eventos memorables de su vida. Siga escribiendo cada mes hasta que él o ella sea adulto. Entréguele el diario para el día de su graduación o como regalo de matrimonio.

4. Lea con su niño o niña. Comience con libros especiales para bebés y lea hasta que su nivel de atención lo permitan. Vaya a la biblioteca pública. La mayoría de las bibliotecas tienen áreas especialmente diseñadas para los niños y horas en las que se leen cuentos.

5. Enmarque y exhiba los dibujos de los niños. Cuelgue sus pinturas o dibujos en algún lugar obvio y observe cuanto tiempo tarda en darse cuenta. Dígale lo bien que usted se siente al mirar su pintura.

6. Sea honesto. Responda a sus preguntas honestamente y en forma apropiada a la edad del niño. Además, si hace una promesa, cúmplala. El niño necesita la seguridad que significa saber que su padre siempre le dirá la verdad.

7. Aprecie la naturaleza. Explíquele al niño porqué un arcoiris es tan bello, o sobre el olor del aire en la montaña o sobre el trinar de los pájaros. Muy pronto él mismo se dará cuenta y le hablará de estas cosas.

8. Acepte un desorden ocasional. Algunas de las mejores lecciones de aprendizaje vienen en forma de desorden. El brincar sobre los charcos de agua, el pintar con los dedos, el revolcarse sobre las hojas o hacer figuras con crema de afeitarse son a veces los mejores recuerdos que se tienen de la infancia.

9. Entregue algo de poder. Dele alternativas y deje que el niño tome pequeñas decisiones. Obligarlo a hacer todo como usted quiere puede jugar en su contra. Mantenga sus límites pero sea flexible cuando sean asuntos de menor importancia. El tomar decisiones hoy, prepara a su hijo para tomar decisiones más difíciles en el futuro.

10. Planifique tardes o noches en familia. Deje un día en la semana para reforzar los lazos familiares. Vaya al cine, a patinar o simplemente quedese en casa y juegue con los niños. Deje que ellos mismos den ideas para estas tardes o noches de familia. Esta es una tradición que recordarán durante muchos años.

11. Tocar a los niños. Sostenga su mano, acaricie su pelo, dele cuantos besos y abrazos quiera. No hay nada mejor para expresar amor que un cálido abrazo de mamá o papá. Es triste, pero algunos padres no recuerdan haber sido abrazados o besados de niños. No deje que su hijo sea uno de estos adultos.

12. No use calificativos negativos. El decirle al niño, "eres malo" en repetidas ocasiones puede perjudicar su auto-estima. Hágale saber que comportamiento específico le molesta. Por otra parte, en vez de decirle, "niño bueno/niña buena" cuando hace algo bien, trate de elogiarlo en forma específica, "Me gusta la forma en que guardas tus juguetes."

13. Mantenga una buena relación con su pareja. Planeen citas y salgan, comuníquese, resuelvan los conflictos y sean cariñosos el uno con el otro. Uno de los mejores regalos que los padres le puede dar a sus hijos es el ser modelos positivos para sus relaciones futuras.

14. Sea un buen ejemplo. Si usa malas palabras su hijo hará lo mismo. Desde que es un bebé, el niño aprende todo por medio de la imitación. Desafortunadamente, no puede no tomar en cuenta los rasgos negativos y adoptar solo aquellos que son positivos.

15. Hacer preguntas. *Cuál es tu color favorito? Qué quieres ser cuando seas mayor? Qué soñaste ayer?* Deje que el niño sepa que usted valora sus pensamientos y sus opiniones.

16. Juegue. Juegue. Juegue. Los niños aprenden mucho por medio de los juegos. Siéntese sobre el piso y construya con los bloques, juegue a disfrazarse, invente historias divertidas o juegue con los juegos de tableros. Déjese llevar y diviértanse juntos.

17. Comer en la mesa. Los estudios demuestran que las familias que comen juntas, al menos una comida diaria, tienen una comunicación más eficaz y más abierta. Haga que las horas de comer sean relajadas y estimule la conversación haciendo preguntas abiertas' tal como, "Cuál fue tu mejor hora o parte del día?"

18. Cantar. Tenga o no buena voz, padres que cantan son padres felices. Juegue a, "Cuál es el nombre de la canción?" Usted se va turnando con los demás entonando una canción hasta que alguien adivine su nombre. La música acerca a la familia que canta junta.

19 "Te quiero." Su hijo tal vez no sepa esto hasta que usted le diga esas dos palabras mágicas.

20. Respete a los niños. Muéstrele la misma cortesía y respeto que usted le mostraría a un amigo. Puede establecer límites sin gritar, sin llamarlo nombres o hacerle pasar vergüenza. El respeto que le muestre se verá reflejado en la manera en que ellos tratarán a los demás en el futuro.

Translated by
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Pp Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

10th Year of Publication

Volume 10, Number 11 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *January 1996*

Kids and computers . . .

"It lets kids work on their own," explains Terry, "but I'm not sure it involves enough thinking."

"I envy my children, in a way, because of the computer," says Sharon wistfully "I had such trouble with math when I was young. I had difficulty grasping concepts my six year old has easily mastered."

Another mother summed up her attitude..."At least I know she's not watching television."

We hear about computers and kids, about how important it is for children (and adults) to become 'computer literate.' But are computers always good for young children? And how can we use computers wisely as 'thinker toys' rather than high tech baby-sitters?

HEY MOM! I JUST BEAT William at CHECKERS!

The Good and The Bad About Computers and Kids

Kids are naturally curious. They poke into everything and ask a thousand questions. The world is a new and exciting place, and they are the eager explorers. Computer programs can be their vehicle for this adventure, presenting them with a rich stream of experiences, knowledge and concepts.

A good program is a tool to let children learn, play and discover. But computers can not and should not replace other activities. Kids need to bake cookies, play with blocks, and cuddle up while an adult reads them a story. They need to cut out shapes and draw pictures. Kids need to poke in the dirt and watch the bugs. They need to look at duck weed on the pond and collect falling leaves.

Using Computers Wisely

So how do the adults in a child's life help a youngster: 1) become comfortable with computers, and 2) use them constructively? Each year more and more computer programs are produced for children. And it is easy to become overwhelmed by the selection available. How can a parent decide if a program is a good choice? Here are several questions to ask about the programs you are considering:

Can the program be used without adult supervision?

You may not want your preschooler to glue himself to the computer without you, but a program for children should be user-friendly. Your youngster should be able to use it without having you stand by flipping through the pages of the manual.

Do you have the equipment to use the program?

All software programs require certain equipment in order to run properly. Make sure your computer has the features that the program requires. If it doesn't, and can't handle other desired programs either, decide whether it is worth upgrading your equipment. If you have a color monitor, but only have a black and white printer you may not want to get a drawing program. Those magnificent screen creations won't look quite so colorful when rendered in shades of gray. Music programs need computers with sophisticated sound capability. Do you have a joystick for programs which recommend a joystick?

Almost all the new programs come on CD-ROM. If your computer is a bit older you may not have CD-ROM capability and may need to upgrade. Also, if you use a disk drive, make certain the program comes on a disk that is the correct size for your computer. Floppy drives come in two sizes. The 3.5" size is currently standard, but some older machines have the 5.25". Before you buy a program, make sure it will fit.

Does your computer have enough RAM (Random Access Memory)? This is the 'working memory' of your computer, the amount of information it can handle. If your computer doesn't have enough memory, the program simply will not run.

In This Issue: Types of Computer Programs..2; Computer Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

continued >>>>>

Is it targeted to your child's age?
Does it allow room for growth? A youngster's mind grows quickly and a good computer program will expand with her. It's okay to buy a program which is good just for the moment, but you don't want to spend serious money on a program which your youngster will outgrow in 6 weeks.

Does the program encourage thinking skills, or is it rote drill and practice?
Again, there is nothing wrong with some drill and practice when a child is learning letters, numbers, etc., provided the whole experience is enjoyable. Computers are endlessly patient while children practice new skills, and they generously reward youngsters for their achievements. But kids need to practice thinking, too. Don't become so concerned about academics that there is no whimsy, no creativity, no 'what ifs.' Children need a balance in their experiences, and in their computer programs.

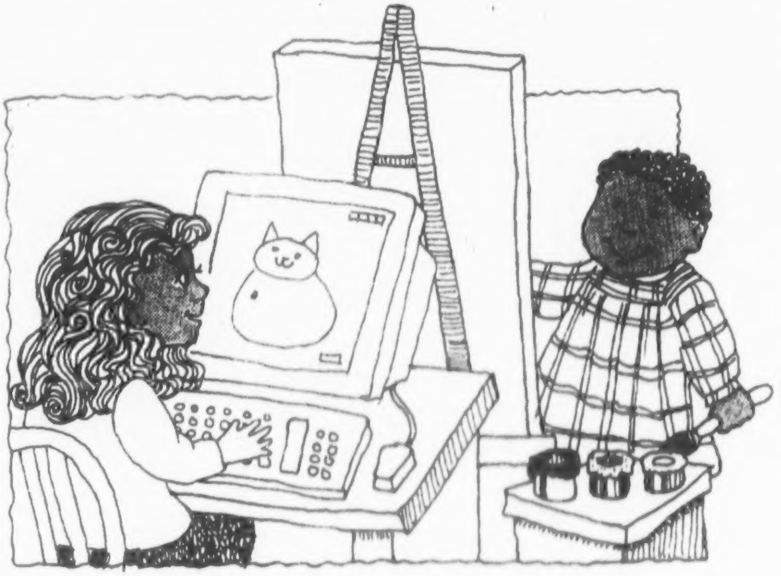
Do the music and graphics support the content or distract from it?
Some programs seem to add on things to make it more glitzy but they have little to do with the purpose of the program. In fact, some of those features can actually distract your child and make it harder to focus on the important information.

Is this a program for just one child or can two children use it at the same time?
Some programs encourage or at least allow kids to work together. If you expect to have two children (whether friends or siblings) using the computer at the same time, you may want to consider this in selecting software.

How interactive is the program?
A good program should offer the child different kinds of activities and encourage him to explore and learn. Clicking on things is very nice, but what will the child experience as a result of just clicking on objects? And will it support and reinforce the information, expand the information, or just distract her?

Are the programs you are considering different from each other?
How do the content and skills required overlap and reinforce each other? Do you want programs that stress new skills and information — or do you want programs which approach the same content from different perspectives? Reading programs and interactive book programs may overlap in the skills targeted for development. Problem solving and science may also overlap. Check the package and decide if each offers something unique. You can decide that you want software which overlaps in order for one to reinforce the knowledge and skills of the other, but you need to consider that as an issue. You don't want to come home with $200 worth of programs and discover they are all about the same.

Types of Computer Programs



Many of the computer programs seem to be divided into subject area.

Academic programs stress...academics. Many of the drill programs for learning letters, words and sounds are inventive and fun. There are also programs which allow children to choose among several activities; listen to the story, learn about the vocabulary words and concepts, listen to songs and play games. *Joey can listen to the computer read him a story and watch the words crawl along the bottom of the screen. The characters and objects in the story fill the rest of the screen. Whenever he wants, Joey can click on these objects and learn more about them.*

Math programs, stressing counting and early math skills are also frequently found on the shelves. Science programs for children allow youngsters to experiment with 'making' weather, creating machinery, exploring the body (whether human or otherwise).

Painting and drawing programs allow youngsters to create their own pictures, color them in, even animate them as well as use special effects. *Jason is working on a drawing, but he seems to enjoy taking the large paintbrush and making huge brush strokes across the screen. His sister Amy loves to use the pattern brush which 'paints' shapes across the screen the way her brother paints solid color.*

Although *music* programs are more difficult to find they allow children to create music for different instruments. Other programs incorporate music as part of the activities allowing youngsters to explore sounds and music.

There are programs that are labeled *'problem solving'* and their goal is to encourage children to explore and investigate. Kids click and drag with the mouse to construct roads, build different objects and machinery and more.

Other programs are organized by *location* and interest rather than academic skill. These take place on farms and airports and encourage children to learn a little bit about everything in that location. Kids can learn the objects, vocabulary, how things work etc. *Sabrina is fascinated by the farm machinery and often clicks on them with her mouse to learn more about what they do and how they operate.*

These programs can get very expensive. Take a few minutes to decide what your youngster likes to do, what skills and interest she already has, and what skills and interests she might want to cultivate. Develop a rough plan of the kinds of programs you want to buy before you go to the store.

continued >>>>>

You can certainly change and adjust, but it will give you a starting place.

Making Computer Time Part of Family Time

Computers should never replace family activities; they should make them richer. If you are exploring art, computers can be one of the ways you and your youngster create. It doesn't replace painting a picture or drawing with crayons. It is simply another medium to use.

Integrate computer activities with more traditional parent-child time. Use a computer to create a picture book. Some programs allow you to create text around the graphics. Take the pictures from some of the coloring book programs and write your own story about them. Make birthday cards and posters. Take some of the science in the software program and see it 'live' in your backyard or kitchen. Take trips to some of the places your child 'explored' through the computer.

Discuss how the computer version is similar and different from the 'real thing.'

Use the computer to enrich your life and your child's life, not to replace it. And most of all...enjoy.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. is a research psychologist and writer. Her articles have appeared in publications nationwide. She is an enthusiastic computer user.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

Magazines

FamilyPC, published monthly by Ziff Davis, and ***HomePC***, published by CMP Publications. Both family-oriented computer magazines feature software reviews. They are available at book stores and newsstands. They may also be carried by local libraries. Because of their family orientation, many of the programs reviewed are educational or 'edutainment' programs ('edutainment' is a new category of program which seeks to educate children while entertaining them).

Green Eggs & RAM is a monthly newsletter published by Bit-by-Bit Computer, Inc. (800) 588 6807, that focuses on using computers in early child-hood settings. It explores such important topics as: developmentally appropriate computer activities and techniques, choosing software, etc.

Books

Newsweek Parent's Guide to Children's Software 96 is an innovative combination of CD-ROM which contains reviews of fifty top titles to provide a glimpse into the program itself, and a book about children's software with reviews and 'report cards.'

Teachers, Computers & Kids: *Recipes for Success in Early Classroom Settings*, by Suzy Crowe and Elaine Penny. Bit-by-Bit Computer, (800-588 6807), 1995. This book offers strategies for early childhood educators to integrate computer play into early childhood settings. It includes information about developmentally appropriate software, and fun activities to engage in away from the computer.

Young Children & Computers, by C. Hohmann. High/Scope Press (800-40-PRESS), 1990. This paperback explains how to get started using computers in preschool and kindergarten, what equipment and software are needed, and how computer activities fit into the daily routine.

High/Scope Buyer's Guide to Children's Software, 11th ed., by C. Hohmann, B. Carmody, & C. McCabe-Branz. High/Scope Press (800-40-PRESS), 1995. This new book reviews over 600 software programs for use in preschools, child care centers, public schools, libraries, and homes.

KidWare: *The parent's guide to software for children*, by Michael C. Perkins and Celia H. Nunez is published by Prima Publishing, Rocklin, CA., 1995. The book reviews software for children ages 2 to 7 and 8 through 13. The software includes math and science, reading, thinking, creative play (art, design, music and writing) and multisubject programs.

Young Children: *Active Learners in a Technological Age*., by J.L. Wright & D.D. Shade, eds. NAEYC (202-328 2604), 1994. Leading experts on children and technology contributed to this volume that includes such topics as choosing developmentally appropriate software, benefiting children's cognitive and social development, and helping staff to use new tech-nologies confidently. (Order #341)

Creators and Distributors of Software for Children

Many companies offer a line of programs for children. The following is a partial list of those who will provide toll free product information:

Broderbund, (800) 521-6263, is the source for The Playroom, James Discovers Math, and Dr. Seuss's ABC.

Knowledge Adventure (800) 542-4240 offers several programs for kids including Casper: Brainy Book, Jump Start Preschool and others.

Maxis Software Toys for Kids (800) 336-2947. The people who brought adults SimCity provide these programs for children.

Sony, (800) 922-7669, offers Mr. Wonder's Greatest Toyshop on Earth. For children ages 4 -9. By selecting one of 96 toys on the toy shelves children learn about energy, weather, living things, environment and sound plus painting and 'making things.'

Virgin Sound and Vision, (800) 814-3530, have available several CD programs for kids, and a sample disk for $3.95 (shipping and handling).

Software Catalogs

In addition to purchasing programs from stores, mail order catalogues offer many of the major software and CDs:

The Edutainment Company, (800) 338-3844, claims to offer hundreds of non-violent Edutainment titles for children and adults on diskette and CD-ROM.

MediaPhiles, (800) 268-6991, specializes in CDs for children and adults.

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Microwave Oven Cooking

Imagine this scenario: you've just picked up your preschooler at daycare after a hard day at work, and are glad to be home. You realize you forgot to defrost anything to cook for supper. With the help of the microwave oven, you defrost and cook a well-balanced meal within 45 minutes. Eating helps you rejuvenate so you are ready to enjoy the evening and prepare for the next day.

While it's best to defrost food in the refrigerator overnight, the microwave oven can be a 'lifesaver' when we don't plan ahead. A baked potato cooked in a microwave takes 4 minutes while one cooked in a conventional oven takes 60 minutes. Microwave ovens are especially helpful in the summer, when a cool kitchen is more comfortable.

Safety First

The microwave oven is not a replacement for the conventional oven and range top, but rather a helpmate, or appliance to be used in conjunction with it. Your preschooler can help you with microwave cookery much in the same way he helps with conventional oven cookery. Safety is the first consideration.

Even though paper plates and plastic casserole dishes are used in the microwave, there is a potential for burns from hot foods. Steam builds up inside a casserole dish, so always open the lid away from you, so the steam does not rise close to either your preschooler's or your face.

Rules to follow:
1. Always have adult supervision.
2. Always use microwave safe dishes (no metal).
3. Always observe safe procedures (see above).

Preschoolers can help with:
- measuring, pouring, mixing
- opening and closing the microwave oven door
- pushing the buttons for the microwave controls

Let's Compare

If you compare microwave and conventional ovens, there are some big differences.
- Paper can be used in a microwave, but most paper products should not be used in a conventional oven.
- Food prepared in a microwave oven cooks faster and continues cooking for a short time after it's out of the oven.
- Liquid does not evaporate in a microwave oven at the same rate as a conventional oven.
- Food cooked in the microwave needs to be stirred, usually in the middle of the cooking time.
- Spices and seasonings intensify in a microwave oven.

If you have a recipe you would like to adapt for microwave cookery, reduce cooking time, liquid added, and spices used.

Most microwave ovens have more than one power level for defrosting, reheating, and cooking. Most recipes state the power level used when the recipe was tested. Foods cook best if placed in a circular pattern, with the thickest part of the food toward the outer edge. Some microwave ovens have a temperature probe to help in determining whether a food is fully cooked or a liquid has reached the correct temperature.

Microwave ovens are more convenient for doing small tasks, such as melting margarine. You can melt a stick of margarine in a coffee mug in less than a minute, and don't have a pan to wash.

Preschoolers often don't like their food too cold. Microwave ovens can 'take the chill off' milk, fruit juices, or cold sandwiches. They can reheat soup right in the bowl when a preschooler comes back to the table an hour after lunch asking for something to eat. Microwave ovens can melt cheese on toast to a gooey perfection, or warm rolls for dinner instantly. Vegetables cook to a crisp-tender, fresh-tasting satisfaction.

Microwave ovens are not convenient for preparing sauces and gravies because stirring is needed. Opening and closing the microwave oven door, removing the dish and the lid, stirring and replacing the cover, placing the dish back in the oven, etc. takes many more steps than simply stirring a sauce on the range top.

Microwave ovens are best used for:
- warming breads and rolls
- heating/reheating
- melting margarine, cheese, chocolate
- defrosting frozen foods
- making quick snacks
- cooking vegetables
- preparing foods quickly

Conventional ovens and range tops are best used for:
- baked goods
- browning foods
- crispy foods
- sauces and gravies

A microwave oven, like a computer, is something we could do without, but also like a computer, there are so many advantages to using one! In this recipe for stuffed peppers, the beef is cooked right inside the pepper, eliminating the task of cooking the beef beforehand. It's not too spicy for preschoolers and the whole family to enjoy.

Microwave Oven Stuffed Peppers

6 medium green peppers
1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
1 cup cooked brown rice
1 small onion, chopped
salt and pepper to taste
8 oz. can tomato sauce

Cut off the top of each green pepper. Talk to your preschooler about how the pepper grows on a vine as you remove the seeds and membrane. In a medium-sized bowl, let your preschooler help mix together the beef, rice, onion, salt and pepper. Spoon the meat mixture into each pepper and place in a casserole dish. Peppers should touch in baking dish so steam and heat conduction help them cook. Pour tomato sauce over peppers. Cover with lid and cook 30 minutes on highest power. If using temperature probe, set at 175 degrees. Let peppers stand covered 5 minutes before serving. Serves 4-6.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
©1996 Preschool Publications, Inc.
**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

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Pp
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de enero, edición del 1996 (volumne 10, número 11) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708 o 1-516-765-5450.

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Los Niños y la Computación...

"La computación ayuda a que los niños trabajen solos," explica Terry, "pero no estoy segura si los ayuda a pensar."

"En cierto modo, envidio a mis hijos por tener un computador," dice Sharon, "Yo tuve tantos problemas con las matemáticas cuando era pequeña. Me fue difícil entender los mismos conceptos que hoy domina fácilmente mi hijo de 6 años."

"Por lo menos sé que no está viendo la televisión," comenta otra madre.

Hoy en día escuchamos mucho sobre los niños y la computación, y sobre la importancia de que ellos, al igual que los adultos, sepan manejar un computador. Pero, ¿Son los computadores buenos para los niños? y, ¿Cómo podemos utilizar un computador de manera que se convierta en un 'juguete para pensar' y no en una niñera de alta tecnología?

Lo bueno y lo malo sobre los niños y la computación
Los niños son curiosos por naturaleza, se inmiscuyen en todo y hacen mil preguntas. Para ellos, el mundo es algo nuevo e interesante que están ansiosos por explorar. Algunos programas de computación pueden ser su vehículo de exploración, entregándoles experiencias enriquecedoras, conocimiento y conceptos.

Un buen programa de computación es un instrumento que le ayuda al niño a aprender, a jugar y a descubrir. Pero el computador no debería reemplazar otras actividades. El niño necesita poder hacer dulces, jugar y acurrucarse mientras la madre le lee un cuento. Todos necesitan cortar figuras de papel, hacer dibujos, jugar en la tierra y mirar los insectos. También necesitan poder ver los diferentes tipos de algas y plantas que hay en una laguna y recoger las hojas que han caído de los árboles.

Usando el computador de manera sabia
Cómo contribuyen los adultos a que la vida de un niño, 1) sea más agradable y productiva con un computador y, 2) utilizarlo de manera constructiva? Cada año se producen más y más programas para niños y es muy fácil verse abrumado por la cantidad que hay en el mercado. Cómo pueden saber los padres si un determinado programa es una buena selección? Más adelante se incluyen algunas preguntas que usted debe considerar antes de comprar un programa de computación para sus niños.

¿Se puede utilizar el programa sin la supervisión de los padres?
Quizás no quiere que su hijo se quede pegado' frente al computador sin que usted esté presente, pero un programa para niños debería ser fácil de utilizar para todos. Su hijo debería ser capaz de utilizarlo sin que usted tenga que leerle las páginas del manual.

¿Tiene el equipo necesario para utilizar el programa?
Todo los programas necesitan equipos específicos para funcionar. Asegúrese de que su computador tenga los requisitos necesarios para echar a andar el programa. Si no los tiene y no puede manejar otros programas que usted desea, decida si vale la pena adquirir equipos nuevos o si debe expandirle la memoria. Si tiene un monitor a color y una impresora de blanco y negro, tal vez no quiera un programa para dibujar. Esos lindos dibujos no se van a apreciar muy bien si es que salen impresos en tonos grises. Los programas de música requieren de computadores con capacidad para almacenar y producir sonidos sofisticados. ¿Tiene una palanca de mando para aquellos programas que lo requieren?

Casi la mayoría de los programas nuevos vienen un formato llamado CD-ROM. Si su modelo de computador no es de los más recientes, puede que no tenga la capacidad necesaria para trabajar en este formato. En este caso tendrá que actualizar su equipo. Si el programa viene en un disket asegúrese que sea del mismo tamaño de los que utiliza su computador. Los diskets flexibles vienen en dos tamaños; el de 3.5" pulgadas es el que más se utiliza hoy, pero algunos computadores más antiguos usan discos de 5.25" pulgadas. Antes de comprar un programa revise si el disket se puede utilizar en su computador.

¿Tiene su computador suficiente memoria o RAM (Memoria Sin Método)? Esta es la memoria que tiene su computador, es decir, la cantidad de información que puede almacenar. Si no tiene suficiente memoria no podrá leer el programa.

¿Está diseñado el programa específicamente para niños de la edad de su hijo?
¿Le ayuda a aprender más? La mente de un niño se desarrolla rápidamente, y un buen programa de computación crecerá con él. Está bien comprarle a su hijo un programa que le sea útil por un tiempo, pero no hay porque gastar dinero en uno que sólo usará 6 semanas y que luego le quedará inadecuado.

¿Estimula el programa a que el niño piense, o enseña una rutina que sólo hay que practicar?
No hay nada de malo con la rutina y la práctica cuando el niño está aprendiendo el abecedario y los números, siempre y cuando el o ella lo disfrute. El computador es sumamente paciente cuando el niño está aprendiendo cosas nuevas, y generalmente le da una buena recompensa por sus logros. Pero los niños también necesitan pensar. No se preocupe tanto sobre sus estudios académicos de manera que ya no haya lugar para algunas extravagancias, un poco de creatividad o para hacer cosas nuevas. Ellos

continuará >>>>>>

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necesitan un equilibrio en sus experiencias al igual que en la computación.

¿La música y los gráficos, apoyan el contenido, o hacen que los niños se distraigan? Pareciera que algunos programas agregan elementos para hacerlos más atractivos, pero a veces, no aportan nada al propósito del programa. En algunos casos, estos elementos distraen y hacen que sea difícil concentrarse en la información.

¿El programa, es solamente para un niño o lo pueden utilizar dos a la vez? Algunos programas estimulan, o por lo menos permiten que los niños trabajen juntos. Si usted espera que dos niños usen el computador al mismo tiempo, puede que considere este aspecto antes de comprar un programa.

¿Cuan interactivo es el programa? Un buen programa debería ofrecerle al niño diferentes tipos de actividades y alentarlo a que explore y aprenda. El hacer clic en los objetos es muy entretenido, pero qué aprenderá el niño cada vez que lo haga? ¿Y al hacerlo, se apoyará o reforzará la información? ¿El hacer clic sobre los objetos servirá solamente para distraer al niño y no está diseñado para enseñar?

¿Son muy diferentes los programas que está pensando en comprar? ¿Se superponen en cuanto a contenido y habilidades requeridas, y en qué medida se refuerza el uno con el otro? Quiere usted programas que pongan énfasis en habilidades e información nueva, o quiere programas que abarcan el mismo contenido desde perspectivas diferentes? Los programas de lectura y los de libros interactivos, a veces se superponen en la enseñanza de habilidades destinadas al desarrollo. En otros casos, los programas para resolver problemas y los de ciencia también se parecen. Puede optar por un programa que sea parecido al que ya tiene, para que uno refuerce los conocimientos y las habilidades del otro. De todas formas, este es un tema que debe pensar detenidamente, ya que no querrá llegar a casa con 200 dólares en programas y luego descubrir que son todo iguales.

Los tipos de programas de computación que hay

Muchos programas de computación están divididos por temas.

Los programas Académicos ponen énfasis en los estudios de la escuela. Los destinados a repetir como método para aprender el abecedario, las palabras y los diferentes sonidos, son ingeniosos y entretenidos. También hay programas que permiten al niño escoger entre varias actividades, por ejemplo; escuchar un cuento, aprender sobre las letras del vocabulario y sobre sus conceptos, escuchar canciones y jugar determinados juegos. *Joey puede escuchar a su computador leyéndole cuentos y al mismo tiempo, ver pasar las palabras que aparecen por un lado de la pantalla. Los personajes y objetos del cuento llenan el resto del monitor. Cuando Joey quiere, él puede hacer clic sobre uno de los objetos para saber más acerca de él.*

Se encuentran con frecuencia *programas de Matemáticas* que enfatizan contar y otras habilidades básicas. Los programas sobre Ciencia permiten que los niños experimenten haciendo' el tiempo, inventando máquinas y explorando el cuerpo humano.

Aquellos *programas de pintura y de dibujo*, permiten que el niño cree sus propios dibujos, los pinte y los anime usando efectos especiales. *Jason está haciendo un dibujo y parece que disfruta usando el pincel más grande para hacer pinceladas gruesas en la pantalla. A su hermana Amy le gusta usar el pincel de formas que pinta figuras en el monitor, de la misma forma en que su hermano le gusta usar colores sólidos.*

Aunque los *programas de música* son más difíciles de encontrar, ayudan a que el niño haga música con diferentes instrumentos. Otros programas incorporan la música como parte de sus actividades, haciendo que los niños exploren los sonidos y la música en general.

Hay programas que tienen un rótulo que dice para *resolver problemas*, cuyo objetivo es estimular a que el niño explore e investigue. Los niños hacen clic y arrastran objetos con el ratón para luego construir calles, diferentes máquinas y mucho más.

Otros programas están organizados por *lugar* e intereses, en vez de por habilidades académicas. Algunos presentan una hacienda o un aeropuerto, y ayudan a que los niños aprendan sobre estos lugares. Ellos pueden aprender sobre los objetos, el vocabulario, y sobre como funcionan las cosas. *Sabrina está fascinada con las máquinas de la hacienda y a menudo hace clic sobre ellas con su ratón, para aprender más acerca de lo que hacen y sobre como funcionan.*

Estos programas pueden ser muy costosos. Tómese un tiempo para decidir sobre lo que le gusta hacer a su hija, sobre las habilidades y los intereses que ya tiene, y sobre las habilidades y los intereses que ella quisiera desarrollar. Elabore un esquema con los tipos de programas que usted quiere comprar antes de ir a la tienda. Obviamente podrá cambiar de parecer y ajustarse de acuerdo a sus necesidades, pero así, ya tendrá un punto de partida.

Haciendo que el tiempo dedicado al computador sea también un tiempo para estar con la familia

Los computadores nunca deberían reemplazar las actividades de la familia; al contrario, deberían enriquecerlas. Si usted está explorando el arte, el computador puede ser una de las mejoras formas para que usted y su hijo hagan arte. El computador no reemplazará pintar un dibujo con crayolas, es simplemente otro medio que se puede utilizar.

Integre las actividades que se pueden hacer con la computadora con el tiempo que se da para estar con su hija. Utilice el computador para crear un libro con dibujos. Algunos programas le permiten escribir un texto en torno a una gráfica. Escoja alguno de los dibujos del programa de libros para pintar, y escriba sus propios cuentos sobre ellos. Haga tarjetas de cumpleaños y afiches. Observe en su cocina o en el jardín algunos de los mismos objetos que ve en el computador. Haga viajes a esos lugares que exploró' su hijo por medio del computador. Comente sobre las similitudes y las diferencias que hay entre lo que se observa en el computador y lo que se observa en la vida real.

Utilice el computador para enriquecer su vida y la de su hijo, no para reemplazarla. Y sobre todo, disfrutelo.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. es escritora y se dedica a la investigación sicológica. Ella es una usuaria entusiasta de las computadoras y sus artículos han sido publicados en todo el país.

Translated by
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Pp Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

10th Year of Publication

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Volume 10, Number 12 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *February 1996*

Teaching children civility ... treating others with care and consideration

MAY I HAVE A TURN ON THE SWING?

"Could I please have one of your cookies?"
"May I have a turn on the swing?"
"Thank you!"
Hearing these polite phrases is an unexpected delight, rather than a rule. What is desperately needed today is the idea of treating others with care and consideration. At the very least, we need to teach children 'civility.' Civility, as defined by Webster's dictionary is the "bare minimum" of good manners. Being polite takes civility a step further, implying "polished manners and thoughtfulness."

In today's society, there is a lack of good manners. Often people don't seem to care about how they treat others in what they say or do. Mark Leibovich, in his article *Rude Awakening: Is Politeness a Lost Cause?* states, "It may seem naive to bemoan rudeness when massive problems [of] crime, disease, famine, war confront the planet."

Why Teach Preschoolers Civility?

Civility is not a list of outdated rules for people to follow. Civility is a way of treating people. Preschoolers need to learn rules that will help them in their everyday life. There are rules in each household, in school, and in society that people need to live by. Learning how to be civil will help preschoolers in typical social situations, such as meeting new people, eating at a restaurant, going to a birthday party. Learning social manners and rules can help preschoolers feel more comfortable in these situations — just as adults feel more comfortable in a situation where they know what to say, what to do and how to act.

When a preschooler asks, "May I have a turn on the swing?" not only will he very likely get a turn, he might also make a new friend. When a preschooler asks, "Could I please have one of your cookies?" she is taking a risk. The answer could be, "Yes!" or "No!" Good manners involves risks that are worth taking. When they get a cookie or a turn on the swing and respond with a "Thank you," other children will appreciate their attitude — and learn that politeness has its rewards.

Hopefully, teaching your preschooler good manners will go beyond the superficial act of saying or doing the right thing, and also teach the caring attitude that makes manners come naturally. In many cultures all over the world, there is a saying similar to the 'Golden Rule': Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. This simply means, treat other people as you would want to be treated. This is the basis for civility. Good manners makes life more pleasant for everyone involved.

Different settings, different rules

Being civil relates to so many aspects of everyday life: home and family, meals, parties, introductions, invitations, guests. Your preschooler's world consists of home and community. Your youngster learns that different behaviors may apply in different situations. At home your preschooler can help pick up her toys after she plays. At the grocery store, she might help pick up a box of cereal that has fallen off the shelf. At home your preschooler might have a special teddy bear she doesn't want to share with anyone. At daycare, all the toys are for sharing. When at home, your preschooler might talk about the show you are watching on TV, but at the movie theater, she will have to wait until the movie is over, or whisper quietly, so she does not disturb the other people in the theater. When riding in the car, your preschooler should stay seat-belted in her car seat, but on a train, all the seats might be taken, so you might have to stand, or there might be an elderly person who needs the seat more than you do.

Different settings call for different rules. It's a lot to learn. Before you go to a restaurant with your preschooler, you might tell him

continued >>>>>

In This Issue: What Prevents Preschoolers from Having Good Manners...2; Preschooler in the Kitchen...3; Library Resources...4

what to expect. "We all have to sit quietly while we are waiting for our food." "We all have to wait until we are finished eating before getting up from the table." These expectations are very different from what is expected at home, where the food may be on the table when he sits down for supper, and where he can get up and play when he is finished eating.

How Children Learn Civility

Preschoolers learn to be civil in much the same way they learn to do everything: by listening, watching, and modeling their behavior after parents and caregivers. Youngsters need to be treated with respect and good manners by the adults who take care of them.

Children very much want to please the adults they love. But manners do not come naturally. Manners need to be taught. Preschoolers are egocentric. (That is, they have trouble seeing a situation from an other person's viewpoint, or putting themselves in another person's place.) Sometimes it might not feel good to share, or to say "I'm sorry." It's best not to force your preschooler into being polite, because then while the outward actions will show correct behavior, the heart will be in the wrong place. If there is a special toy belonging to your preschooler and she really is not ready to share it, ask her to help her friend find one of her other toys to play with. If your preschooler is not ready to say "I'm sorry," don't force her. It will embarrass all the people involved. You can say "I'm sorry" for her.

Preschoolers are naturally curious. They might ask a question in front of someone that is not polite. For example (pointing to a pregnant lady) he might say loudly, "Why does she have a big tummy?" This situation can be uncomfortable for you. You can apologize on behalf of your preschooler. Children don't always know when they are being rude. "Our job as parents is to teach children acceptable ways of expressing themselves," point out authors Nancy Samalin and Patricia McCormick (see Resources, page 4). Youngsters might also say words you don't want them to say, especially in public. (See **P&p** 5/94: *When preschoolers use 'bad' language.*)

If you treat your preschooler politely, it is more likely he will treat you and other people politely, also. If you knock on his bedroom door before entering, if you don't scold him in front of his friends, if you show others you care about them, most likely he will reflect your good attitude and good manners.

What prevents preschoolers from having good manners?

Several factors can prevent preschoolers from behaving politely. One is not feeling physically well. If she is tired, hungry, or sick, she might not have the energy or be in the right state of mind to use good manners. If your child is going through the stress of having a new sibling, or starting preschool, or the sadness of a friend moving away, or losing a pet, she might not be able to use her best manners. If an adult is not feeling well or is under stress, he may also say or do something impolite.

Ten social manners preschoolers can learn

1. Use the words "Please" and "Thank you"
2. Don't grab
3. Use a quiet voice indoors
4. Share a toy
5. Take turns
6. Greet with a "Hello"
7. Say "Sorry" if you cause an accident
8. Don't tell secrets in front of others
9. Knock before entering a closed room
10. Help others

Ten table manners preschoolers can learn

1. Come to the table with clean hands
2. Chew with mouth closed
3. Wait until everyone is served before you start to eat
4. Don't talk while chewing
5. Don't interrupt when others are talking
6. Ask someone to pass food rather than reaching for it
7. Don't eat noisily
8. Don't stuff your mouth
9. Use a napkin
10. Ask "May I be excused?" when you want to leave the table

Strategies

Judith Martin, author of the Miss Manners Column, who has written extensively about manners, wrote this in her *Guide to Rearing Perfect Children:* "Children instinctively accept the idea of right behavior and wrong behavior. A good parent owes it to a child to teach manners as an interesting and useful skill."

When teaching manners, try to state the rule in a positive way.

If your preschooler doesn't say, "Thank you," or "I'm sorry," then you say it for him.

If your preschooler grabs a toy, ask him to give it back. Put the timer on for 5 minutes and say, "Let's take turns. When the timer goes off it will be your turn."

If your youngster won't share a special toy, say, "Let's find another toy for Megan." Explain to Megan that this is a special toy Amanda doesn't want to share.

If your child says a 'bad' word in front of others, apologize for her. Say, "We have other words to use."

If your preschooler describes someone in an uncomplimentary way, apologize for her, explaining that she didn't understand that she was being rude.

If your preschooler uses a loud voice (shouts), say, "Please use your indoor (quiet) voice."

If your youngster licks her fingers, say, "Please use your napkin."

If your child interrupts, say, "I need to finish my sentence."

Amy Houts has written many poems and articles in addition to two books: *Learning Through Cooking Activities*, Preschool Publications, 1993 and *An ABC Christmas*, Standard Publishing, 1993. She has been the author of the *Preschooler in the Kitchen* column for **Parent and preschooler Newsletter** since 1986.

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Snakes Never Slurp Their Soup: a time for table manners

by Amy Houts

Illustrations by Susan Eaddy

Cats come washed and ready to dine
Squirrels sit straight in their chairs.
Walruses wait before they eat
'Til everyone has his fare.

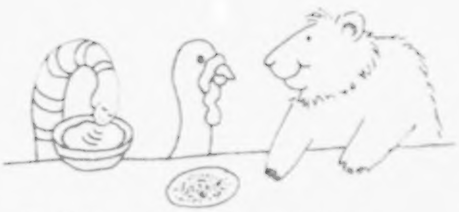
Raccoons remember the "magic word."
Muskrats munch very small bites.
Courteous Gnus don't make noise when they chew
And Peacocks don't pick fights.

Lizards don't leap, they stay in their seat.
Swans don't shovel their food.
A Cow coughs politely, and covers her mouth
Cheetahs share their good mood.

MAY I PLEASE BE EXCUSED?

Cougars converse in polite conversation.
Mice don't let loud voices be used.
Sea Gulls don't squawk, so others can talk.
Owls ask to be "excused."

Hamsters use handkerchiefs, when they are needed.
Billy Goats taste new foods.
Possums will pick up a fork or a spoon
What about you? Will fingers do?



Snakes never ever slurp their soup
Turkey's don't gobble their grain.
Grizzlies don't chew with their mouths askew
Do you? Is your mouth closed, too?

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LIBRARY RESOURCES

MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"The Age of Experience," by Linda Bridges, ***National Review,*** Dec. 1993, p. 71.

"Rude Awakening: is Politeness a Lost Cause?" by Mark Leibovich, ***Utne Reader,*** Jan-Feb, 1993, p. 138.

"Your Rude Dude," by Nancy Samalin with Patricia McCormick, ***Parent's Magazine,*** July 1993, pp. 164-168.

"Growing Up Polite," by Salley Shannon, ***Parent's Magazine,*** June, 1995, pp. 87-88.

BOOKS

For Adults

Letitia Baldrige's Complete Guide to the New Manners for the '90s, by Letitia Baldrige. Rawson Associates, 1990. This practical and down-to-earth book is just what the title implies, a complete guide. Some situations are new to the '90s. One section is specifically about children.

Miss Manners Guide to Rearing Perfect Children, by Judith Martin. Atheneum, 1984. Judith Martin prefaces her chapters of letters with her charming wit and wisdom about raising children.

For Children

Manners, written & illustrated by Aliki. Greenwillow Books, 1990. Through a variety of situations, on the telephone, at mealtime, etc., this book illustrates what constitutes good manners.

Say Please, written & illustrated by Virginia Austin. Candlewick Press, 1995. Every animal in this story says, "please" and "thank you" in its own special way. So a little boy named Tom learns to say "please" and "thank you" in his own way, too.

The Alphabet of Civility, by Virginia Clark Clarkson, illustrated by Cynthia Vehslage. Starrhill Press, 1993. A book to be enjoyed by adults and children, this book relates each letter of the alphabet to some aspect of civility, beginning with A: "Always keep it if you promise. Always return it if you borrow."

How My Parents Learned to Eat, by Ina Friedman, illustrated by Allan Say. Houghton Mifflin, 1984. A touching courtship story about an American sailor and a Japanese Lady, told by their young daughter.

Dinosaurs Never Say Please and Other Stories, performed by Bill Harley. Round River Productions, 1987. Four different stories are told in this audiocassette. One tale, "Dinosaurs Never Say Please," tells about a boy who learns to say that magic word.

What Do You Say, Dear? What Do You Do, Dear? by Sesyle Joslin, illustrated by Maurice Sendak. Harper, 1958. These two classic books send their positive messages about manners with a comical sense of humor.

Pookins Gets Her Way, by Helen Lester, illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. Houghton Mifflin, 1987. Pookins wants everything her way, until she learns about cooperation.

One Hungry Monster: A Counting Book in Rhyme, by Susan Heyboer, illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. Little, Brown, 1989. One by one, hungry monsters, with atrocious table manners, arrive as uninvited guests to a little boy's house.

Mind Your Manners, by Peggy Parish, illustrated by Marylin Hafner. Mulberry Books, 1994. This *Read-Alone book* explains manners with short chapters, in basic language children can understand.

The Magic Word is...Please; The Magic Words Are...Thank You, by Tony Tallarico. Tuffy Books, 1986. Two board books that teach manners. In the first book children learn to use the word" please." In the second book, children thank each other for sharing, waiting, and other everyday occurrences.

What's polite? by Harriet Ziefert, illustrated by Richard Brown. Puffin Books, 1995. This lift-the-flap book tells about Scooter's trip to a restaurant, and what manners he should use while he is there.

Bibliography by Amy Houts
and Betty Farber

Additional Information regarding Computer Resources in the January 1996 issue

To receive information about the *Newsweek Parent Guide to Children's Software 96* telephone (800) 634-3002, Operator #7. We apologize for not including this detail.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)

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**Printed in U.S.A.**

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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de febrero, edición del 1996 (volumne 10, número 12) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Enseñando a sus niños a tener buenos modales...y a tratar a los demás con cuidado y consideración

"¿Me puedes dar uno de tus galletas, por favor?"
"¿Me puedes dar un turno para usar el columpio?"
"¡Gracias!"

El escuchar frases como éstas es más encanto que norma. Hoy en día necesitamos tratar a los demás con cuidado y consideración. Desde una temprana edad es necesario que enseñemos a nuestros hijos algunas normas de cortesía. El diccionario Webster's define la palabra cortés como "tener un mínimo" de buenos modales. El ser educado lleva a la cortesía un paso más, demostrando "modales refinados y cuidado."

En la sociedad de hoy hay falta de buenos modales. Muchas veces pareciera que a las personas no les importa como tratan a los demás. En su artículo, *El Despertar de la descortesía: Es la cortesía una causa perdida (Rude Awakening: Is Politeness a Lost Cause)*, Mark Leibovich dice que, puede parecer ingenuo lamentarse sobre la falta de buenos modales, cuando problemas como el crimen, las enfermedades, la hambruna y la guerra, azotan al mundo.

¿Porqué enseñarle a los niños a tener buenos modales?

El tener buenos modales no consiste en seguir una lista de reglas pasadas de moda, es una forma de tratar a las personas. Su preescolar necesita aprender reglas que lo ayuden en su vida diaria. Hay normas que se deben acatar, en cada familia, en el colegio y en la sociedad. El aprender a tener buenos modales ayudará a que su hijo enfrente situaciones sociales comunes, como el conocer a gente diferente, el comer en un restaurante y el ir a una fiesta de cumpleaños. Además, el aprender ciertos modales y reglas sociales pueden ayudarlo a sentirse más cómodo en este tipo de situaciones — de la misma forma en que los adultos se sienten más a gusto en un ambiente en el que saben que decir, que hacer y como comportarse.

Cuando un preescolar pregunta, "¿Me puedes dar un turno para usar el columpio?" no sólo tiene más posibilidades que se lo den, tal vez conozca a un futuro amigo. Cuando dice, "¿Me puedes dar una de tus galletas, por favor?" está tomando un riesgo. La respuesta podría ser "Sí" o "No." Los buenos modales implican riesgos que vale la pena tomar. Cuando a su hijo le den una galleta o un turno en el columpio y él responda con un "Gracias," los otros niños van a apreciar su conducta y aprenderán que los buenos modales tienen su recompensa.

Ojalá que al enseñarle a nuestros hijos a tener buenos modales, su actitud no se convierta sólo en un acto superficial que los lleve a decir y hacer lo correcto, sino que también les enseñe a tener una actitud considerada hacia los demás. Esta es la que hace que los buenos modales se manifiesten de forma natural. En muchas culturas alrededor del mundo hay una dicho parecido a la "Regla de Oro" (Golden Rule) : Haz a los demás lo que te gustaría que te hicieran a ti. Esto significa que hay que tratar a los demás como a uno quisiera que lo traten. Esta es la base de la cortesía. Los buenos modales hacen que la vida sea más agradable para todos.

Ambientes diferentes, reglas diferentes

Los buenos modales están relacionados con muchos aspectos de la vida diaria, como el hogar, la familia, las comidas, las fiestas, cuando conocemos gente, en las invitaciones y hasta con nuestros invitados. El mundo del preescolar consiste en su casa y su comunidad. El aprende que los diferentes comportamientos se pueden expresar en situaciones variadas. En la casa, puede ayudar a recoger sus juguetes después de jugar. En la tienda, tal vez ayude a levantar una caja de cereales que se ha caído del estante. En la casa, puede que tenga un oso de peluche que no le gusta compartir con nadie, en cambio, en la preescuela, todos los juguetes se comparten. En el hogar, tal vez su hija le hable sobre el programa que está viendo en la televisión, pero en el cine, tendrá que esperar que acabe la película o murmurarle despacito para no molestar a los demás. En el carro, el niño tiene que ir sentado y con el cinturón bien asegurado, pero, en un tren, si están ocupados todos los asientos, tal vez tenga que ir parado o darle el asiente a una persona de edad.

Una ambiente diferente requiere de reglas diferentes y hay mucho que aprender. Antes de ir a un restaurante con su hijo, explíquele como será. "Nos sentamos tranquilamente mientras esperamos que nos traigan la comida." "Todos tenemos que esperar, hasta que los demás terminen de comer para levantarnos de la mesa." Este comportamiento es muy diferente al de la casa en donde las normas son diferentes. Por ejemplo, si hay comida sobre la mesa cuando el niño se va a sentar, y si se le permite levantarse para ir jugar una vez que haya terminado.

continuará >>>>>>

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Como aprenden los niños a tener buenos modales
Los niños aprenden a ser educados de la misma forma en que aprenden las demás cosas: al escuchar, al ver y al imitar el comportamiento de sus padres y el de las personas que lo cuidan. Los niños también necesitan que los adultos que los cuidan, los traten con respeto y buenos modales. Los niños quieren complacer a los adultos que estiman, pero los buenos modales no vienen de manera natural. Hay que enseñarlos. El preescolar es egocéntrica. (Es decir, le resulta difícil ver un situación determinada desde el punto de vista de otra persona, o ponerse en el lugar de otro.) Pueda que no siempre se sientan bien compartiendo, o deciendo, "¡Perdón!" Es mejor no obligar a que su hijo sea educado, porque mientras que su conducta hacia fuera es la correcta, su corazón está en el lugar equivocado. Si hay un juguete especial que le pertenece y su hija no está preparada para compartirlo, dígale que ayude a su amiga a buscar otro. Si no está dispuesta a pedir "Perdón," no la obligue. Será vergonzoso para a todos. Usted puede pedir "Perdón" por ella.

El preescolar es naturalmente curioso. Puede que hagan preguntas mal educadas delante de las personas. Por ejemplo, (señalar a una mujer que está embarazada) puede que diga en voz alta, "¿Porqué tiene la barriga tan grande?" Tal vez esta situación sea embarazosa para usted. Puede disculparse en nombre de su hijo. Los niños no siempre se dan de que están siendo mal educados. Nuestro rol como padres es enseñar formas de expresión aceptables," señalan los autores Nancy Samalin y Patricia McCormick (ver Fuentes [Resources], página 4). Por otra parte, los niños a veces dicen cosas que uno no quiere que digan, especialmente en público. (Ver **P&p** 5/94: *Cuando el preescolar dice 'malas' palabras.*)

Si trata a su hijo con buenos modales, es más probable que lo trate a usted y a los demás correctamente. Si toca la puerta de su habitación antes de entrar, si no lo regaña delante de sus amigos y si usted le demuestra a los demás que los aprecia, es muy posible que en su hijo se refleje esa actitud positiva y los buenos modales.

¿Que es lo que impide que los niños tengan buenos modales?

Hay varios factores que pueden hacer que su hijo no tenga buenos modales. Uno de estos es el sentirse físicamente mal. Si está cansada, o si tiene hambre o está enferma, tal vez no tenga la energía o el ánimo para ser educada. Por otra parte, si está sufriendo el estrés que le produce el nacimiento de otro niño en la familia, si está comenzando la preescuela, o si está con pena porque un amigo se mudó o porque se le perdió su mascota, tal vez no pueda usar sus mejores modales. Si el adulto no se está sintiendo muy bien o está bajo estrés, también puede ser descortés.

10 tipos de comportamiento que el niño puede aprender para tener buenos modales

1. Utilizar las palabras "Por favor" y "Gracias"
2. No 'agarrar' las cosas
3. Hablar en voz baja cuando está en la casa
4. Compartir los juguetes
5. Turnarse con los demás
6. Saludar a las personas con un "Hola"
7. Pedir "Perdón" si es que causa algún accidente
8. No contar secretos delante de los demás
9. Tocar la puerta antes de entrar a una habitación
10. Ayudar a los demás

10 tipos de comportamiento que el niño puede aprender para tener buenos modales en la mesa

1. Lavarse las manos antes de sentarse a comer
2. Masticar la comida con la boca cerrada
3. Esperar que todos se hayan sentado para comenzar a comer
4. No hablar mientras está comiendo
5. No interrumpir a los demás mientras están hablando
6. Pedir a alguien que le pase la fuente de comida en vez de esforzarse por tomarla él mismo
7. No hacer ruido mientras está comiendo
8. No llenarse la boca con comida
9. Usar una servilleta
10. Pedir permiso antes de levantarse de la mesa

Estrategias
Judith Martin, autora de la columna Miss Manners (Señorita Modales), y que ha escrito mucho sobre los modales, escribió lo siguiente en su *Guía para Criar Niños Perfectos, (Guide for Rearing Perfect Children)*: "Los niños aceptan instintivamente la idea del buen comportamiento y del mal comportamiento. Es un deber de todo buen padre enseñarle al hijo que el tener buenos modales es también una cualidad interesante y útil."

Cuando usted esté enseñando a su preescolar, trate de plantear la regla de manera positiva.

Si su preescolar no dice, "Gracias," entonces hágalo por él.

Si su hijo agarra un juguete, pídale que lo devuelva. Por medio de un cronómetro, establezca turnos de 5 minutos y dígale, "Turnémosnos. Cuando el cronómetro suene será su turno."

Si su preescolar no quiere compartir su juguete más especial, dígale, "Busquemos otro juguete para Megan." Explíquele a Megan que éste es un juguete especial y que Amanda no lo quiere compartir.

Si su preescolar dice una 'mala' palabra, pida disculpas por ella y dígale, "Hay otras palabras que podemos usar."

Si su preescolar se refiere a alguien de manera poco halagadora, pida disculpas y explique que ella aún no entiende porqué estaba siendo mal educada.

Si su preescolar se lame los dedos, dígale, "Por favor usa una servilleta."

Si su preescolar la interrumpe dígale, "Necesito terminar mi frase."

La autora, Amy Houts ha publicado varios artículos, poesía y un libro con ilustraciones titulado *An ABC Christmas*, Standard Publishing, 1993. Es autora de *Learning Through Cooking Activities*, Preschool Publications, 1993, y *Preschooler in the Kitchen*, una columna para **Parent and Preschooler Newsletter**, desde 1986.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

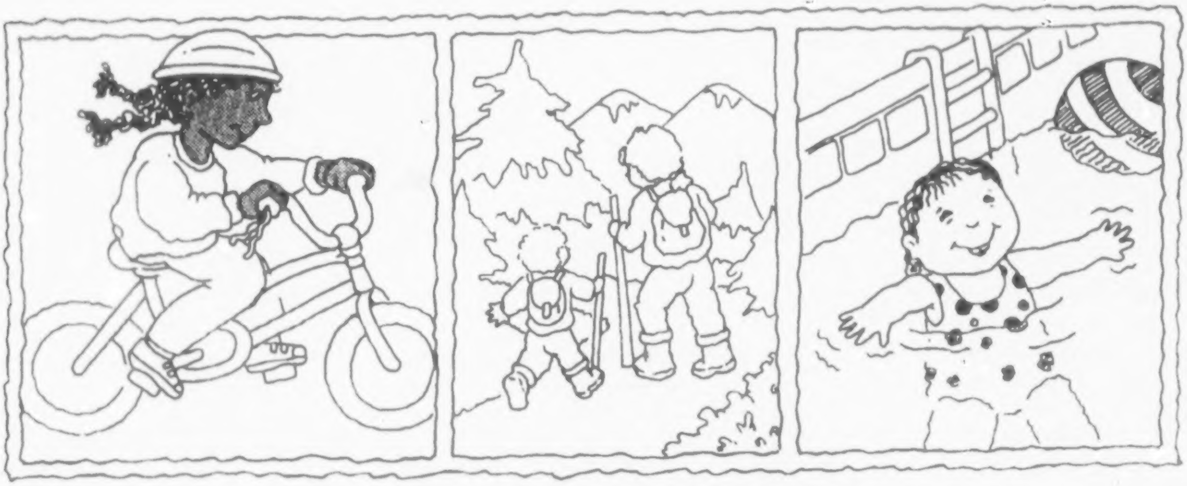
Pp
Parent
and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

11th
Year of
Publication

Volume 11, Number 1 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *March 1996*



Physical fitness for preschoolers

No pain, no gain. Target heart rate. Pumping up. These are all expressions we relate to fitness and exercise for adults. But when it comes to fitness for preschoolers, the only word we should associate with young children and exercise is *fun.*

Why consider exercise for young children at all? Don't preschoolers naturally get all the exercise they need just by being children? After all, how often do the words "Why *can't they just sit still?*" or *"These kids are bouncing off the walls!"* come to mind? Certainly, it *seems* as if preschoolers are active enough.

Currently there's much debate on just this topic. Some experts feel that up to age 7 or 8, just being a kid provides exertion enough. However, others cite the fact that children 2 to 5 years old spend an average of 25 1/2 hours a week watching television as evidence 'being a kid' isn't what it used to be. And that statistic doesn't include any time spent playing video games or working with computers. Some studies show that up to 50 percent of American children are not getting enough exercise.

Here's what else the studies say:

- Forty percent of 5 to 8 year olds show at least one heart disease risk factor, including elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity. In the past, such risk factors were rarely seen in anyone under the age of 30.
- The first signs of arteriosclerosis are appearing at about age 5.
- The number of overweight children has doubled in the past decade, with some studies indicating 1 in 5 school-age children are overweight. Obesity can lead to heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. It increases stress on weight-bearing joints, lowers self-esteem, and affects relationships with peers. Obesity is greater among children and adolescents who watch TV, due not only to being sedentary, but also to consumption of high-calorie snacks.
- Obese children tend to become obese adults. Children with high blood pressure are likely to become adults with high blood pressure.
- Sedentary habits among adults are a major health problem in the United States, with an estimated 250,000 deaths a year due to low levels of activity and fitness!

Yes, the figures are frightening.

But since scare tactics may not be the best means of motivation, here's the good news:

- Children who are physically active and experience success in movement activities show higher levels of self-esteem and a greater sense of accomplishment.
- Exercise helps children get through the day without fatigue and makes them more alert.
- Fit children are more likely to participate in sports, dance, games, and other physical activities (like rollerblading, swimming, and hiking) that improve muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, cardiorespiratory endurance, and body composition (the ratio of fat to muscle).

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Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

Although there's currently little research suggesting childhood physical activity significantly impacts childhood health, it's believed individuals who are physically active as children are likely to remain physically active in adulthood. So physical activity in childhood may indeed have an impact on *adult* health.

The key in early childhood is enjoyment. For an adult, success might be defined in terms of an extra lap run, an extra ten pounds lifted, or getting through an extra 15 minutes of aerobics. For a preschooler, success in any physical activity is simply a matter of how much fun it is!

The American Alliance for Health, Physical Fitness, Recreation and Dance defines physical fitness as "a physical state of well-being that allows people to:
1) perform daily activities with vigor,
2) reduce their risk of health problems related to lack of exercise, and
3) establish a fitness base for participation in a variety of physical activities."

If this definition is to become a lifelong reality for your preschooler, establishing a pattern of daily physical activity should begin now. In fact, by the age of 5, physical activity should be as much a daily habit as brushing teeth!

Rae Pica is a movement specialist and author of the Moving & Learning Series, published by Human Kinetics (800/747-4457), and of Experiences in Movement published by Delmar (800/347-7707).

She has served as a consultant to numerous early childhood, physical education, and parent groups, and to YMCA of the USA, Head Start Bureau, and the Sesame Street Research Department.

In a society that places less and less value on recreation, you may find it challenging to make physical activity a daily habit. But it's worth the effort - because your regular physical activity will serve both you and your preschooler. The reason? One of the best ways to help your children become and remain physically fit is to act as a role model. If you exercise and take part in physical activities — and demonstrate a positive attitude about it — your children will likely follow suit.

Here are some other suggestions to keep in mind:

- Encourage, praise, and validate your child's physical activity at every opportunity. Young children learn to value what is valued by the people who matter to them.

- Remember competition is not developmentally appropriate for preschoolers, and an emphasis on competition and winning is often the reason children of all ages stop taking part in physical activities. Most experts agree the emphasis, before the age of six, should be on exploration and recreation rather than on organized sports and structured competition.

- If your preschooler has older siblings who participate in organized games, put the emphasis on involvement and doing one's personal best rather than winning. The message is an important one for children of all ages.

Suggestions for parents

- Keep developmental, and not chronological, age in mind. Although most children acquire motor skills (use of large and small muscles) in generally the same order, they don't necessarily acquire them at the same time. So don't worry about the timing of your child's physical abilities; each child develops at his own rate. (If your child hears you worrying out loud that she may not be well coordinated or 'athletic,' she'll soon come to believe it herself.)

- Turn off the TV! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than two hours. of viewing a day. In a similar vein, you may want to monitor the number of hours your child spends playing video and computer games, which is just as sedentary as TV viewing.

- Select a preschool or child care center that includes movement as an integral part of its curriculum. Early childhood professionals know movement is the young child's most important mode of learning yet often succumb to parents' wishes that the preschool or child care center be more oriented toward 'academics.' Let them know how important you consider movement to be!

- Be particular about the extracurricular programs in which you enroll your child. Look for the programs that emphasize exploration versus skills acquisition, and cooperation over competition.

- Make sure your children have plenty of space in which to play and to practice gross-motor skills (large muscle). Maturation alone doesn't ensure motor skills will develop automatically; practice and instruction are needed. Your child will will more likely take part in physical activities later if he's learned basic movement skills and feels confident and coordinated.

- When your children are outdoors, encourage them to run and climb and roll down hills. (It's more important than keeping clothes clean!) Provide toys and materials requiring manipulation and/or effort, like balls in a variety of shapes and sizes, swings, and wheeled (rather than motorized) toys.

- Provide opportunities for your preschooler to play with other children. Sometimes just adding one more child to the 'mix' can make all the difference.

Most important, plan family activities that involve movement. Go walking or bike riding after meals. Young children view such outings as adventures rather than exercise. If you have errands to do within walking distance, don't take the car! On a weekend afternoon, take a hike, or go to the park, or the local roller skating rink.

Sign up for swimming lessons or parent/child movement classes at the local 'Y.' Your efforts don't even have to be out of the

continued >>>>>

ordinary. At home, put on a piece of music in a steady beat (Rock 'n Roll) and pretend to hold a track meet. Put on a recording of a march and hold a 'parade' in the living room. Just put on a piece of music and dance. But don't let on that the real goal is fitness; rather, you're just looking to have some fun! (And music always makes moving more fun.)

You can also encourage your child to move with you while you do your own daily workout. The National Children and Youth Fitness Study II found a significant relationship between mothers who exercise and children who were physically active. But you have to demonstrate a positive attitude about exercising — try not to grumble as you go for that last sit-up!

In addition, you should ask for your child's help with physical chores like sweeping and mopping, raking leaves, shoveling snow, and dusting. And whistle while you work! Young children naturally love to move. So the most significant thing you can do is help ensure your child never loses that love. And you can do that most easily by making certain they experience lots of success in movement and physical activity. That means:
1) there's no right or wrong with how they move, and
2) it's fun. If these ingredients are the biggest factors in your child's movement experiences, chances are he'll want to keep moving for the rest of his life.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Experiences in Movement, by Rae Pica. Delmar, 1995. This text explores the role of movement in the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development — in both indoor and outdoor settings.

For Adults and Children

Creative Movement for the Developing Child, by Clare Cherry. Fearon, 1971. This book is chock full of ideas for spur-of-the-moment activities and poems that inspire movement.

The Incredible Indoor Games Book, by Bob Gregson. Fearon, 1982. This resource includes over 160 group projects, games, and activities designed for indoor play. It invites children to use problem-solving skills, while encouraging imagination, spontaneity, coöperation, socialization, and collaboration.

Movement Activities for Early Childhood, by Carol Hammett. Human Kinetics, 1992. This paperback includes a collection of classroom-tested activities for preschoolers that makes learning new skills fun. The author divides the book into four areas of movement, targeting a child's ability rather than age in the areas of 1) locomotor skills; 2) ball-handling skills; 3) gymnastic skill; and 4) rhythmic activities.

Preschoolers Moving & Learning , by Rae Pica, with music by Richard Gardzina. Human Kinetics, 1990. This resource is a complete movement program featuring 200 movement activities within 40 developmentally appropriate lessons. The program includes five audiocassettes of original music to inspire movement.

Let's Move & Learn, by Rae Pica and Richard Gardzina. Human Kinetics, 1990. This is a 2-tape set of 32 movement-motivating songs geared toward toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergartners through third graders. Parents may follow the easy movement suggestions in the accompanying booklet or let the song lyrics and music guide and inspire the children.

More Music for Moving & Learning, by Rae Pica and Richard Gardzina. Human Kinetics, 1990 . This package comes with an instructional booklet and six cassettes featuring 62 songs and five favorite themes, including animals, holidays, relaxation (quiet times), exploring different cultures, and pretending.

Books and Videos for Children

Facets Non-Violent, Non-Sexist Children's Video Guide, compiled by Virginia A. Boyle. Facets Multimedia, Inc. (1-800-331-6197), 1996. This guide was created to help parents use video as a positive force in children's lives. It includes lists of videos indexed by title, age recommendation, and subject. For example: look under *Dance and Creative Movement* for video titles that relate to the topic of physical fitness.

D.W. Flips! by Marc Brown. Little, Brown, 1987. At first, D.W. can't even do a forward roll in gymnastics class. But with persistence and much practice, she finally learns to do flips. Preschoolers will enjoy her success.

Take Time to Relax! by Nancy Carlson. Puffin Books, 1993. Tina and her family are always running somewhere: to ballet class, aerobics, volleyball, and swimming class. But when a snowstorm closes all the roads, they find out what fun it can be just to stay home together telling stories, singing songs, and relaxing.

Albert the Running Bear's Exercise Book, by Barbara Isenberg & Marjorie Jaffe. Clarion Books, 1984. A teddy bear in a red jogging suit explains how readers can do a series of child-centered fitness activities.

Toddlerobics, by Zita Newcome. Candlewick Press, 1996. It's time to jump and roll and bend down low in the toddler gym! Energetic toddlers invite readers to join them as they practice all their amazing moves.

Play Ball, Amelia Bedelia, by Peggy Parish. (An I Can Read Book®) HarperTrophy, 1995. Amelia Bedelia knows nothing about baseball, but she is willing to help out the neighborhood team when one player is sick — with hilarious results.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt, retold by Michael Rosen. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1990. This imaginative story is one that children love to act out. The illustrations by Helen Oxenbury show a family of four children and their father cross the tall grass, wade through the cold river, enter the dark forest, etc. until they see the bear — and then reverse the adventure as they run back home.

You Can Ride a Horse. Blackboard Entertainment/Red Sky Film, 1994. (1-800-YOU CAN-1) This video takes children on a field trip to explore the real world of horses. 30 minutes.

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and Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Picnics

You have just arrived at the park with your preschooler. You stopped to see a crocus blooming, and watched for other signs of spring: a budding leaf, Forsythias in bloom, or a robin. When you arrive at the park lawn, your preschooler runs to the swings and begs for a push. After swinging, climbing, and digging in the sand he slows down and expresses the need for a drink. You are prepared! You brought water and cups, crackers and fruit. You rest for a short time in the shade before partaking in refreshments.

Preschoolers who are physically active need to have access to liquids, especially in hot weather, so their bodies won't get dehydrated. But parents need to take caution when feeding children directly after physical activity; children might want to drink too much, too fast.

Be sure your preschooler rests for a short while before drinking, and give a small amount to begin with, then pour a full cup. Water is the best choice, yet many preschoolers don't like the taste. Diluting juice with part water is one way to give preschoolers the liquid they need. Of course, milk is important in a preschooler's diet, along with other nutritious foods.

While you and your preschooler are participating in sports, rollerblading, and hiking, why not pack a lunch or dinner and have a picnic? With a little planning and a little help, you can make an ordinary day into a memorable day.

Traditional Picnic Foods

- Chicken
- Salads of any kind
- Breads or rolls
- Fresh fruit
- Refreshing drinks: punches, juice, water

Preschoolers will enjoy getting ready: taking things out of the refrigerator, putting them into a picnic basket or cooler. Pack napkins, cups, plates, eating utensils, paper towels or wash cloth. Add ice or ice-packs to keep cold food cold.

Picnic Chicken

Chicken can be cooked beforehand and eaten cold. If you plan on grilling the chicken at the park, you will need to pack charcoal, a charcoal lighter, and the necessary cooking utensils. Keep preschoolers well away from the fire at all times. At least one adult should be watching the children and another adult cooking.

Boneless chicken breasts cook relatively quickly, in about 15 minutes, and can be basted with a mixture of butter, lemon juice and spices, such as garlic, paprika, and parsley.

If you are cooking bone-in chicken, allow 45 minutes for grilling. A barbecue sauce can be brushed on the chicken, only during the last 15 minutes of cooking, to prevent the sauce from burning.

Spiral Pasta Salad

8 oz. package spiral pasta, cooked
Homemade or bottled Italian dressing
10 Black olives, sliced (optional)
About 4 oz. Cheddar cheese, cut into cubes

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain, cool. Preschoolers can help stir in 1/2 cup dressing, or enough to moisten. Add olive slices and cheese cubes. Chill.

Indoor Picnic

If it's too cold or rainy, you could have an indoor picnic in your living room. Spread out a blanket or tablecloth. Turn off the T.V. Pack your basket or just carry everything in: finger sandwiches, burgers or cheese pizza, as long as it's not too messy. Imagine you are at the beach or riding in a railroad dining car to a faraway place.

You might want to set down a tray or cookie sheet under the drinks, in case of spills. After you eat, lie down and look up at the "clouds" or "stars". Or play an "I spy" game. And dream of chasing away the rain and the cold, so that soon you could spend an afternoon outside.

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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Printed in U.S.A.

Subscription Rates
(U.S., Canada & Mexico)

English Language Edition
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year.......75.00

English/Spanish Language Edition
one year...US$38.00
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En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de marzo, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, numero 1) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Ejercicio físico para preescolares

¡Sin dolor no se logra nada! ¡El objetivo es alcanzar un ritmo cardíaco óptimo! ¡Hay que aumentar el ritmo! Todas estas expresiones están relacionadas con el mantenerse en forma y ejercicio físico para los adultos. Pero cuando se refiere a los niños, la única palabra que deberíamos asociar con ellos y el ejercicio físico, es el termino *diversión*.

¿Porqué pensar en el niño y el ejercicio físico? ¿No es que ya hacen todo tipo de ejercicios por el solo hecho de ser niños? Después de todo, no es cierto que a menudo pensamos, *"Porqué no pueden quedarse quietos?" "Estos niños ya se dan contra las murallas."* Ciertamente *pareciera* que el preescolar es lo suficientemente activo por si mismo.

Actualmente hay un debate muy grande sobre este tema. Algunos expertos piensan que hasta los 7 u 8 años de edad, el sólo hecho de ser niño implica bastante ejercicio físico. Sin embargo, otros señalan que el ser niño hoy, no es igual a como era antes, y que los niños de 2 a 5 años de edad hoy dedican un promedio de 25 horas y media a la semana a ver televisión. La estadística no incluye el tiempo que ocupan jugando videos o en el computador. Otros estudios señalan que casi un 50 por ciento de los niños de este país no hace suficiente ejercicio.

El estudio también señala lo siguiente:

- Un 40 por ciento de los niños de 5 a 8 años tiene por lo menos uno de los factores que aumentan el riesgo a tener problemas cardiacos, incluyendo un nivel alto de colesterol, presión sanguínea alta y obesidad. En el pasado, estos factores de riesgo casi nunca se veían en personas menores de 30 años.
- Las primeras señales de arteriosclerosis comienzan a aparecer alrededor de los 5 años de edad.
- Hoy, el número de niños con sobrepeso es casi el doble que antes. Algunos estudios indican que 1 de cada 5 escolares sufre de sobrepeso. La obesidad puede causar problemas cardíacos, diabetes y presión alta. Además, aumenta la presión en las articulaciones de los huesos por el peso que tienen que sostener, disminuye la auto-estima del individuo y afecta las relaciones con otras personas de la misma edad. La obesidad es más común en los niños y en los adolescentes que ven televisión, y no sólo porque son sedentarios, sino también porque consumen alimentos de alto valor calórico.
- Los niños obesos tienden a ser adultos obesos. Por otra parte, los niños con presión alta son más propensos a tener el mismo problema cuando sean adultos. -• Los hábitos sedentarios entre los adultos son un grave problema en los Estados Unidos. ¡Hay aproximadamente 250,000 muertes al año como consecuencia de la falta de ejercicio y el no estar en forma! Sí, las cifras son aterradoras.

Pero, ya que la táctica del miedo no siempre es las mejor forma de motivar, aqui hay algunas buenas noticias:

- Los niños que son físicamente activos y tienen éxito en las actividades donde hay movimiento, tienen una mayor auto-estima y se sienten más realizados.
- El ejercicio ayuda a que el niño termine el día sin fatiga y más alerta.
- Es muy probable que el niño que está en forma, participe en deportes, en danza, en juegos y en otras actividades físicas (como el patinar, el nadar y las excursiones) que mejoran la fortaleza muscular, la resistencia física, la flexibilidad, la resistencia cardio-respiratoria y la composición corporal (el porcentaje de grasa en relación a la masa muscular).

Aunque hoy, hay pocas investigaciones que señalen que la actividad física en los niños tenga un impacto significativo en su salud, se cree que si el niño es físicamente activo, es muy probable que permanezca activo hasta cuando sea adulto. Por lo tanto, la actividad física en la niñez puede contribuir más adelante cuando sea adulto.

La clave para la niñez temprana es divertirse. Para un adulto, el éxito puede definirse en términos como; correr una vuelta más, levantar otras 10 libras o hacer 15 minutos más de gimnasia aeróbica. ¡Para el preescolar, el éxito en cualquier actividad física es simplemente que tan divertido es!

The American Alliance for Health, Physical Fitness, Recreation and Dance (La Alianza Americana para la Salud, la Mantención Física, la Recreación y el Baile), define la actividad física como, "un estado físico de bienestar que permite que las personas:
1) hagan algún tipo de actividad física diaria con vigor,
2) reduce el riesgo a que tengan problemas de salud relacionados con la falta de ejercicio, y
3) logra crear una base donde el mantenerse en

continuará >>>>>>

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forma se convierte en la participación en diversas actividades físicas."

Si esta definición se va a convertir en una realidad de por vida para su hijo, debería comenzar ahora estableciendo un patrón diario de actividad física. ¡De hecho, a los 5 años, la actividad física debiera ser una rutina, igual que el lavarse los dientes!

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Sugerencias para los padres

En una sociedad que cada vez más le resta valor a las actividades recreativas, puede ser un reto lograr que la actividad física se convierta en un hábito diario. Pero vale la pena, porque la actividad diaria le servirá tanto a usted como a su hijo. ¿Porqué? Una de la mejores maneras de ayudar a que su hijo se mantenga en forma y físicamente bien, es sirviendole de modelo. Si usted hace ejercicio y toma parte en actividades físicas, demostrando una actitud positiva al respecto, es muy probable que sus hijos le sigan sus pasos.

Algunas sugerencias para considerar:

- Estimule a su niño, alabe y reafirme su actividad física cada vez que pueda. El niño aprende a valorar lo mismo que valoran las personas que a él le importan.
- Recuerde que las competencias no son apropiadas para al nivel de desarrollo del niño preescolar. El énfasis en competir y en ganar es generalmente la razón por la cual muchos niños dejan de tomar parte en actividades físicas. La mayoría de los expertos concuerdan en que antes de los 6 años de edad, se debería poner más énfasis en la exploración y en la recreación, más que en el deporte organizado y las competencias estructuradas.
- Si su preescolar tiene hermanos mayores que participan en algún tipo de juego organizado, destaque la importancia de participar y la necesidad de dar lo mejor de sí, en vez de ganar. Este mensaje es muy importante para los niños de cualquier edad.
- Siempre tome en cuenta la edad de desarrollo de su hijo y no la edad cronológica necesariamente. Aunque por lo general, la mayoría de los niños adquieren habilidades motrices (el uso de músculos grandes y chicos) en el mismo orden, no las adquieren necesariamente al mismo tiempo. Por lo tanto, no se preocupe si hijo aún no es hábil físicamente, cada niño se desarrolla a su propio ritmo. (Si su hija la escucha comentando en forma preocupada de que puede que no sea uña atleta coordinada, muy pronto ella también lo creerá).
- Apague la televisión! La Academia Americana de Pediatría recomienda ver no más de 2 horas de televisión al día. Similarmente usted querrá supervisar la cantidad de horas que su hijo pasa jugando en la computadora y en los juegos de video, que son actividades tan sedentarias como ver televisión.
- Elija una preescuela o un guardería infantil que incluya movimiento como parte integral de su curriculum. Los educadores de párvulos saben que para el niño, el movimiento es la forma más importante que tienen para aprender. Sin embargo, a veces se rinden a los deseos de los padres de que el colegio se centre más bien en el aspecto académico. Dígales que para usted es tan importante el ejercicio físico. • Sea exigente en cuanto a los programas extracurriculares en que quiera inscribir a sus hijos. Busque aquellos que enfatizan la exploración en vez de adquirir destrezas, y la cooperación sobre la competitividad.
- Asegúrese de que su hijo siempre tenga espacio para jugar y para ejercitar habilidades como correr, saltar y empujar (músculos grandes). La madurez por si sola no asegura que las habilidades motrices se desarrollen automáticamente; la practica y la instrucción también son necesarias. Es más probable que su hija toma parte en alguna actividad física más adelante si es que ha aprendido destrezas básicas para el movimiento y si se siente confiada y coordinada.
- Cuando sus hijos están al aire libre, estimule que corran, trepen y rueden hacia abajo por un cerro. (¡Es más importante que mantener la ropa limpia!) Proporciónceles los juguetes y materiales que necesiten, como las pelotas de diferentes formas y tamaños, y juguetes que se balancean o que ruedan en vez de lo que tienen motores.
- Dele al preescolar la oportunidad para que juegue con otros niños. A veces con el sólo agregar un niño a la "mezcla" se puede hacer la diferencia.

Más importante es el planificar actividades familiares que impliquen movimiento. Ande en bicicleta o vaya a caminar después de las comidas. Sus hijos ven estas salidas más como aventura que como ejercicio. Si tiene algún diligencia que hacer cerca de su casa y puede ir caminado, no lleve el coche. En una tarde de fin de semana, vaya de excursión, vaya al parque o a la cancha de patinaje del barrio.

Inscríbase para tomar clases de natación o en un curso de movimiento para padres e hijos en la YMCA. Sus esfuerzos no tienen que ser fuera de lo normal. En la casa, finja que están en una carrera, toque alguna música de marcha y hagan un desfile, o en simplemente bailen. Pero no haga evidente que la verdadera meta es el mantenerse en forma, en vez, lo único que busca es pasarlo bien! (Aunque la música siempre hace que el moverse sea más divertido.)

También puede estimular a su hijo a que se mueva cuando usted está haciendo su rutina diarias de ejercicios. El National Children Youth Fitness Study II encontró un relación significativa entre las madres que hacen ejercicios y los niños que son físicamente activos. Hay que demostrar una actitud positiva frente al ejercicio. Trate de no quejarse demasiado mientras termina el último abdominal.

También, debiera pedirle al niño que la ayude con los quehaceres de la casa como barrer, fregar el piso, rastrillar las hojas secas, sacar la nieve con la pala y sacudir el polvo. Y silbe mientras trabaje. Es cosa natural que a los niños les guste moverse. Así que usted debería asegurarse de que nunca pierdan ese amor por el ejercicio. Y lo puede hacer asegurando que su hijo tenga mucho éxito en el movimiento y en la actividad física. Eso significa que, (1) no hay bien ni mal en como ellos se mueven y, (2) es entretenido. Si estos ingredientes son los factores más importantes cuando su hijo realiza alguna actividad física, es probable que quiera seguir moviendose el resto de su vida.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
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Pp Parent and preschooler
Newsletter
A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics
11th Year of Publication
Volume 11, Number 2 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *April 1996*

Words to Love by: Communicating with preschoolers

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." I remember hearing that phrase for the first time during second grade recess when I witnessed a girl being teased by a group of children who were calling her "flea bag." I was impressed by her defiant comeback until I got closer and saw the tears streaming down her face. Her tears told me how she really felt. I now know that words do hurt and children are sensitive little beings who take words to heart.

Parents who maintain an ongoing effort to use appropriate words and positive messages when speaking to a child establish a foundation for successful family communication. This is the best way to teach a child — by example — words to love by.

Jenny, Use your words & tell me what you want.

Form a connection from the beginning
Speaking to a child from infancy can start you and your child on the road to a lifetime of successful communication. Babies delight in drinking in the rich tones of parents' voices and you can see it in a baby's expression when you speak. The best way to communicate with an infant is in a face-to-face position which encourages eye contact and conversation. Hold the baby in your lap; look directly at him and begin to initiate a dialogue. You're almost certain to receive an instant response in the form of gurgles and coos indicating the baby is communicating with you.

As your child grows into an active, curious preschooler continue talking to him on this personal level. Set aside regular times for having parent/child conversations such as during car rides, meal times or at bedtime.

Five steps to healthy communication

1. Have an open-door policy. From the beginning, always encourage your child to come to you with questions or problems of all kinds, no matter how embarrassing or silly they seem. You may feel uncomfortable answering questions about certain subjects, such as sex. But, remember that information coming from you is better than the misinformation he may receive from his peers. You are your child's best teacher. When your child comes to you with a question or problem take the time to listen.

2. Teach children effective communication techniques. At the age of 22 months, Jenny developed an irritating communication pattern common to her age group. When an object was out of her reach she would simply point at it and let out an ear-piercing scream until her startled mother placed it in her hands. This screaming eventually became intolerable. Her parents consulted her pediatrician and explained that although Jenny could speak in simple sentences, she would scream more than she would speak. The pediatrician advised them not to react to the screaming but only to Jenny's use of words. By simply changing their response to, "Jenny, use your words and tell me what you want..." Jenny's screams quickly transformed into simple requests. Teaching a child early on to "use words" when communicating and then responding positively when she does, encourages the child's use of language.

3. Have patience and good listening skills. Some preschoolers take a long time to express a thought or finish a sentence. Patience is a definite necessity when communicating with preschoolers. By far, the most difficult part of communication for busy parents is listening. No matter how tempting it is to interrupt, stop yourself. Let your child complete the entire thought before initiating your response.

4. Avoid empty threats. Many parents make the mistake of blasting out empty threats to get children to behave.

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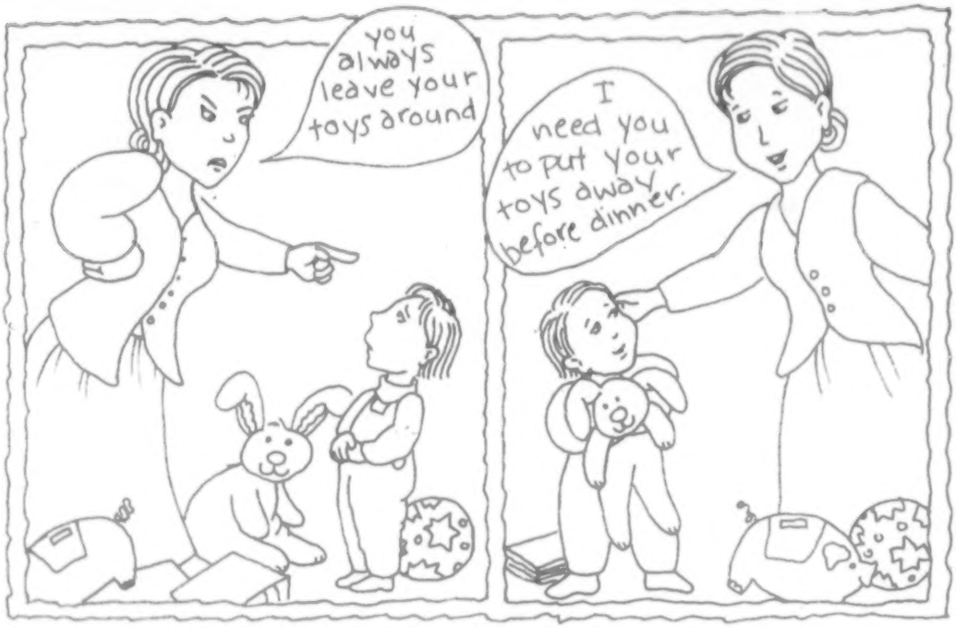
Youngsters learn to recognize the empty-threat-game and eventually test you on it. Trent is a 3-year-old boy who hates getting dressed. If he had his choice he would wear nothing but a smile every day. "If you don't put your clothes on right now you're not going to the birthday party," his mother warned him 15 minutes before they were set to leave. Having no intention of missing the party, she didn't follow through on the consequence. Trent has heard this type of meaningless threat before so he continued to dawdle around in his Power Ranger underwear knowing full well he would get to the birthday party eventually. A great many well-intentioned parents also say, "I really mean it..." then refuse to follow through on the consequences — sending mixed signals to a child. Trent's mother could have said, "It's time to get dressed so that you won't miss the games and the ice cream." Now it's up to Trent to get dressed or suffer the consequences. It's important for children to receive clear and concise messages from parents — ones they know can and will be enforced.


you always leave your toys around
I need you to put your toys away before dinner.

5. Be a positive communicator. Imagine you're a young child and you're told 20 negative statements throughout the course of one day, times 7 days a week, times 52 weeks a year. After adding the numbers, it's easy to see how communication can break down in a negative household. Look at the following examples.

Negative Messages	Positive Messages
I'm busy now.	Sure, I can help you with that puzzle just as soon as I finish writing this letter.
What's the matter with you?	Will you tell me with your words why you're so upset?
No yelling in the house.	Please use your indoor voice.
Don't talk to me while I'm on the phone.	I can talk to you about that as soon as I'm finished with this call.
Get off the table.	Tables are not for climbing. I need you to get down.

Children take our words literally

Young children are like sponges absorbing and processing information all around them. Despite their apparent resiliency, they are very sensitive to our words and the manner in which we say them. Tara, a 4-year-old girl has a golden retriever named Laddy. Any time the front door is opened, Laddy darts out the door and races around the neighborhood, up and down the streets. The family constantly chases the dog, trying to catch him before he meets up with the bumper of a minivan. The last time Laddy escaped, Tara's father blurted out, "I'm going to kill that dog!" Later, the father found Tara crying on the sofa. When he asked Tara what was the matter, Tara's response was, "I don't want you to kill Laddy, I love Laddy."

History repeats itself

Think back to your childhood. Was your mother a screamer? Was your father the withdrawn and silent type? Was conflict resolved quickly or never dealt with at all? Poor communication patterns set forth by your parents when raising you will likely be repeated in your own family if you don't take steps to change them. If you came from a wonderful and supportive home, it's almost second nature to raise your own children the same way.

How to make changes for the better

- *Rearrange and reword.* Take some common expressions used in your own household and give them a positive makeover. "Quit whining" transforms into "Please use your regular voice so I can understand what you're saying." Keep practicing and soon it will come without thinking.

- *Don't talk when you're angry.* When you hear a negative comment coming out of your mouth, stop yourself. If you have to, leave the room so you won't say something harsh. It's okay to explain to your child that you're too upset to talk right now but you'll speak to her later. Give yourself a moment alone to plan gentler words.

- *Adopt a no-hurting policy.* Just as some families have a no-hitting policy the same goes for banning hurtful words by children and parents.

- *End the legacy.* Remind yourself that you are a separate person from your parents and you're committed to raising your child without harsh words, criticism, or screaming. Recognizing the poor communication patterns in your own childhood is the first step in knowing how to make changes for the better.

Start a cycle of loving words today

The words we are using on our children now will likely be

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spoken to our grandchildren in the future so it's our responsibility to start a cycle of generations of loving words. Although we will all make mistakes during these precious years, it's important to keep the mistakes minimal and select appropriate words that will give our children self-esteem and confidence. Some of what you say now will probably be ingrained in your child's mind for years to come. Take the opportunity to create memories of warm conversations in a home filled with endless "I love yous."

Author Katrina Katsarelis is a freelance writer and mother of two children. She writes a newspaper column about raising young children called, "Watching them Grow."

Dos and Don'ts
when communicating with preschoolers

- DO get down on a child's eye-level when talking.
- DO speak to your child as politely as you speak to other people's children.
- DO use "I messages" whenever possible. "I messages" keep the focus on what you need from the child and away from personal faults of the child. "I need you to put your toys away before dinner," gets more results than, "You always leave your toys lying around."
- DO speak to your child the way you would like her to talk. If you use slang or an occasional cussword you can almost guarantee your child will say it too.
- DO apologize to a child whose feelings you've hurt. If you've yelled, or said something you regret, tell your child that you lost your temper and that you're sorry.
- DON'T force an apology out of a child who's done something wrong. Just because he says the words doesn't make it true. Forced apologies aren't real apologies.
- DON'T compare your child with others.
- DON'T hurt your child with nonverbal communication. The rolling of your eyes or a frustrated sigh when he talks to you tells the child instantly that he's getting on your nerves.
- DON'T place labels on your child. Children who are labeled with bad descriptions generally see themselves that way and may conform to the label. Children who are labeled as being good may find it difficult always to live up to the high standards set for them.
- DON'T lecture. A simple explanation will do the trick. Children will learn to see a lecture coming a mile away and tune out.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Joyful Child Journal, PO Box 566, Buffalo NY 14213. This quarterly publication offers educational and inspirational articles for parents and professionals, along with values-based stories for children. Its purpose is to reawake the natural joy within each person.

Raising Your Child's Self-Esteem, Box 1003, North Wales, PA 19454. With original articles as well as ideas from a variety of publications, this newsletter encourages parents to develop the potential that is in each child ..."if we can develop their self-confidence and sense of worth, they will happily manage their futures in successful ways."

Books for Children About the Self

Let Me Do It! by Janice Gibala-Broxholm. Bradbury Press, 1994. Whenever there is something that needs doing: whether it's pouring the milk, washing the car, or getting the knitting yarn for Grandma, four-year-old Katie wants to do it. Never mind that it doesn't always turn out perfectly. Independent-minded Katie can do it all by herself!

Fang, by Barbara Shook Hazen. Aladdin Books Edition, 1991. A young boy tells about his dog named Fang, who is big and looks fierce. The boy thought Fang would protect him from scary things, like the big kids on the corner, the booming thunder during a storm, and the monsters in his closet. But Fang is even more afraid of things than his young master is. When the child helps Fang to be braver, he helps himself too, in the satisfying ending to this story.

Look, I'm Growing Up, by Marilyn Knoepfel and Betty Farber. Standard Publishing, paperback edition, 1995 (1-800-543-1353). "When I was a baby, I had to be dressed. Now I can zip my zippers." The preschoolers in this story describe their many positive accomplishments learned since they started growing up. Includes an "I Am Growing" song.

Hats off to Hair! by Virginia Kroll. Charlesbridge Publishing, 1995. Hairstyles can be an important aspect of ourselves as individuals. The many choices we have: long, short, straight, curly, braided, etc. are described in this book, illustrated with lovely portraits of children from many different cultures, painted by Kay Life.

Now I'm Big, by Margaret Miller. Greenwillow, 1996. With color photographs to illustrate the text, a group of young children tell how much they've grown since they were little babies.

Benjamin's Bugs, by Mary Morgan. Bradbury Press, 1994. Benjamin Porcupine is as curious as most toddlers, and when his explorations cause him to be caught up in a tree where he can't get down, or fall into the pond, his Mama is right there to help. This gentle tale is illustrated with soft pastel colors.

It's My Birthday, by Helen Oxenbury. Candlewick Press, 1993. The famous author/illustrator tells a charming, cumulative tale of a little boy who is going to bake his own birthday cake. Each of his animal friends helps him by getting a needed ingredient, and then all of them sit down together to eat it.

Help, Mama, Help! *A Touch-and-Feel Pull-Tab Pop-up Book,* by Shen Roddie and Frances Cony. Little, Brown, 1995. One night, baby chick plans to camp out in the yard all by himself. He assures all the other creatures who come by that he is not afraid. But when he turns on his flashlight, he thinks he sees a ghost, and runs to his Mama's arms for help. She calms his fears, so that he can fall asleep happily. This cheerful and entertaining story has tabs to pull, a zipper to zip and a ribbon to tie, keeping preschoolers amused all the way through.

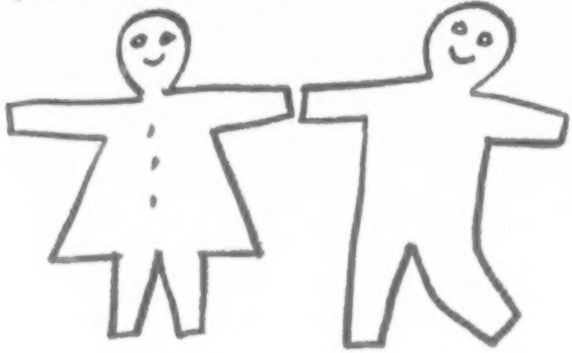
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters *An African Tale,* by John Steptoe. Lothrop, 1987. This memorable story is now a classic. It is visually stunning, illustrated with lush, colorful paintings. The tale is of Mufaro's beautiful daughters: one kind and gentle, responding to all creatures with consideration, and the other of opposite temperament, selfish and inconsiderate — and what happens when the king is looking for a worthy and beautiful wife.

The Magic Cap, *A Flavia Dream Maker Story,* by Flavia Weedn & Lisa Weedn Gilbert. Hyperion, 1995. In this story, inspired by an old Swedish tale, a mother and her young son live in a tiny cottage. They are poor, but their home is filled with love. One winter, the mother makes her son a cap made of fabric scraps to keep him warm. Every time the boy puts the cap on his head, a strange and wonderful feeling comes over him. He tells everyone he knows about the magical cap and soon people offer to trade their possessions for his cap. This is a warm story with a loving message.

Bibliography by Betty Farber

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

This month's column features an excerpt from Amy Hout's Early Childhood Resource Guide *Learning Through Cooking Activities*. Preschool Publications, Inc. 1993. (For further information telephone toll-free: 1-800-726-1708.)



Gingerbread People: Body Parts

Purpose:

To learn:

- about body parts and what they do.
- about the senses: smell and taste.
- new vocabulary.

What You Need: To make 2 dozen 3-inch gingerbread people: 1/2 cup shortening or margarine; 1/2 cup sugar; 1/2 cup dark molasses; 1/4 cup water; 2 1/2 cups flour; 3/4 teaspoon salt; 1/2 teaspoon baking soda; 3/4 teaspoon ginger; 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg; 1/8 teaspoon allspice; Decorations: raisins, currants, small candies, etc. Gingerbread boy or girl cookie cutters.

What You Do: Cream shortening and sugar. Let preschoolers help you measure and stir in molasses, water, flour, salt, baking soda, ginger, nutmeg, and allspice. Cover with plastic wrap; chill for 2 hours or overnight. Roll dough 1/4 inch thick on a floured pastry cloth or board. Let each child cut with gingerbread boy or girl cookie cutter. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Let each child press decorations into dough for eyes, mouth, buttons. Label each child's cookie with a small paper and their name, or make a chart on a separate piece of paper to keep track of who made what cookie. Bake in preheated 375°F oven 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on wire racks. Yield: about 2 dozen 3-inch cookies. At snacktime, serve each child the cookie he/she decorated.

Discussion

- Talk about the parts of your body, and what each part helps you do: legs help us walk and run. Hands and arms help us eat and play ball. What other things can we do with our body parts?
- Give each child a piece of a cookie. How does the cookie smell? What body part do you use to smell? How does the cookie taste? What body part do you use to taste it?
- Emphasize different cooking verbs that are used to make gingerbread people: cream, chill, stir, measure, heat, roll, cut, press, bake, remove, cool.
- Point out the different ways of preparing foods: salads require no cooking; soup must be made on top of stove, gingerbread cookies baked in the oven.

Related Activities:

- Art Project: Use brown construction paper to make gingerbread people. Children may cut them out, decorate them, and draw their faces with crayons. Use them to act out the story of the gingerbread boy.
- Sense of Smell Books: Preparation: Cut 2 pieces of construction paper in half, crosswise. Stack these together and fold in half to make a booklet. Staple twice on the edge. Make enough booklets for each child in the class. Activity: Let children put glue on a page and then sprinkle an herb or spice on the glue. Repeat until each page is used. Use ginger, nutmeg, and/or allspice, and other spices that you have on hand.

Books

- "The Gingerbread Boy" in *Read Me a Story: A Child's Book of Favorite Tales*. Scholastic, 1991, and other story collections. This is the story of a gingerbread boy who runs away from a variety of creatures until a fox catches him and eats him up.
- *My Feet* (1990); *My Hands* (1990) by Aliki. Crowell. Two books that help children understand how their body parts work.
- *Clifford Follows His Nose* by Norman Bridwell. Scholastic Cartwheel Books, 1992. A Scratch & Sniff Book lets you join Clifford, the small red puppy, in identifying a variety of odors.

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)

©1996 Preschool Publications, Inc

Printed in U S.A.

Subscription Rates
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Pp
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de abril, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 2) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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Palabras para dar cariño: Comunicándose con preescolares.

"Los palos y las piedras me pueden quebrar los huesos, pero las palabras nunca me dañarán." Recuerdo haber escuchado esta frase cuando estaba en segundo grado. Durante el receso vi como un grupo de niños molestaba a una chica y le decían "bolsa de pulgas." Quedé muy impresionado con la respuesta desafiante de la niña, pero cuando la miré de cerca vi como se le caían las lágrimas. Sus lágrimas me dijeron como se sentía realmente. Ahora sé que las palabras le hacen daño a los niños y que ellos son personas pequeñas sensibles que se toman las palabras a pecho.

Establezca una conexión desde el principio

El hablar con el niño desde la infancia puede ser el primer paso para que usted y él tengan una comunicación exitosa de por vida. Un bebé se deleita al escuchar la voz de sus padres, usted puede verlo en su cara mientras le habla. La mejor manera de comunicarse con un infante es en una posición de cara a cara, porque estimula el contacto por medio de los ojos y la conversación. Sostenga al bebé sobre su rodilla; mírelo directamente y comience a dialogar con él. Es muy probable que logre una respuesta inmediata en forma de glu glús y caricias, que indican que el niño se está comunicando con usted.

A medida que su hijo se convierta en un preescolar activo y curioso, siga hablando con él a nivel personal. Establezca horas regulares para tener conversaciones entre él y usted. Estas pueden ser durante un viaje en coche, a la hora de la comida o antes de ir a dormir.

5 pasos para tener un comunicación sana

1. *Tenga una política de puerta abierta.* Desde el principio, estimule a que su hijo vaya donde usted con preguntas o con problemas de cualquier tipo, no importa que tan embarazosos o absurdos le parezcan. Puede que se sienta incómodo al responder preguntas sobre determinados tópicos, como el sexo. Pero recuerde que la información que proviene de los padres es mejor que la desinformación que puede recibir de los niños de su misma edad. El padre es el mejor profesor del niño. Cuando acuda donde usted con una pregunta o con algún problema, tómese un tiempo para escuchar.

2. *Enseñar al niño a tener técnicas de comunicación efectivas.* A la edad de 22 meses, Jenny desarrolló un patrón de comunicación bastante irritante, pero común para los niños de su edad. Cuando un objeto estaba fuera de su alcance, simplemente lo apuntaba con su mano y se ponía a gritar hasta que su madre se lo entregaba. Sus gritos llegaron a ser tan intolerables que sus padres hablaron con el pediatra. Le explicaron que Jenny podía hablar y decir frases cortas, pero que sin embargo, prefería gritar. El médico les dijo que sólo le pusieran atención cuando hablara y no cuando gritara. Simplemente cambiando su contestación a "Jenny, usa palabras y dime que es lo que quieres..." los gritos se fueron transformando en pequeñas respuestas. Enseñar a temprana edad a que el niño "use palabras" para comunicarse, y luego responder de manera positiva cuando lo hace, estimula a que utilice el lenguaje.

3. *Tenga paciencia y habilidad para escuchar.* Algunos preescolares tardan en poder expresar un sentimiento o completar una frase. La paciencia es una necesidad básica cuando se está comunicando con los preescolares. En la comunicación, la parte más difícil para los padres es el saber escuchar. No importa que tan tentador sea interrumpir, deténgase! Deje que su hijo complete toda la frase, antes de contestar.

4. *Evite amenazas falsas.* Muchos padres cometen el error de soltar amenazas falsas para hacer que sus hijos se comporten. Los niños aprenden a reconocer el juego de las amenazas falsas y eventualmente comienzan a poner a prueba a sus padres. Trent es un niño de 3 años de edad que odia vestirse. Si pudiera elegir, no usaría más que una sonrisa' todo el día. "Si no te vistes ahora, no irás a la fiesta de cumpleaños," le advirtió su madre 15 minutos antes de que partieran. Al no tener las más mínima intención de perderse la fiesta, la madre no siguió hasta el final con la amenaza. Trent ha escuchado este tipo de advertencias sin sentido, así que continuó dando vueltas en sus calzoncillos Power Rengar, sabiendo que sí iría al cumpleaños. Una gran cantidad de padres bien intencionados dicen, "Estoy hablando en serio..." y luego no llevan a cabo las consecuencias — enviándole señales confusas al niño. La madre de Trent podía haber dicho, "Es hora de vestirse para que tu no te pierdas los juegos y los helados." Ahora

continuará >>>>>>

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le corresponde a Trent el vestirse y sufrir las consecuencias. Es importante para el niño recibir mensajes claros y concisos por parte de sus padres — aquellos que él sabe que serán aplicados.

5. Sea un comunicador positivo. Imagínese que usted es un niño al que le dicen 20 comentarios negativos a lo largo de un día, multiplicado por 7 veces a la semana, multiplicado por 52 semanas al año. Luego de hacer las sumas, es fácil ver como la comunicación puede romperse al interior de un hogar negativo. Vea los siguientes ejemplos:

Mensaje negativos:
Ahora estoy ocupado.
En la casa no se grita.
No me hables mientras estoy hablando por el teléfono.
Bájate de la mesa.

Mensaje positivos:
Por supuesto que te puedo ayudar a armar el rompecabezas, pero un vez que termine de escribir esta carta.
¿Me puedes decir con palabras porqué estas molesto?
Por favor, no grites dentro de la casa.
Puedo hablar contigo una vez que termine de hablar por teléfono.
Las mesas no son para subirse encima. Es necesario que te bajes.

Los niños toman las palabras al pie de la letra

Los niños son como esponjas' que absorben y procesan toda la información a su alrededor. A pesar de su aparente adaptabilidad son muy sensibles a lo que les decimos y en la manera en que decimos las cosas. Tara, una niña de 4 años tiene un perra Labrador llamada Laddy. Cada vez que se abre la puerta de la casa, Laddy se dispara hacia afuera y comienza a correr por las calles del vecindario. La familia constantemente la sale persiguiendo para tratar de agarrarla antes de que la atropellen. La última vez que se escapó, el padre de Tara dijo sin pensar, "¡Voy a matar a ese perro!" Luego encontró a Tara llorando en el sofá. Cuando le preguntó a su hija que le sucedía, ella respondió, "No quiero que mates a Laddy, yo la quiero."

La historia se repite

Recuerde cuando usted era un niño. ¿Su mamá gritaba? ¿Era su padre silencioso y reservado? ¿Se resolvían los conflictos rápidamente o no los abordaba? Si usted creció en una familia donde el patrón de comunicación era pobre, es muy posible que éste se repita en su familia si no trata de cambiarlo. Si viene de una familia maravillosa y que lo apoyaba constantemente, criará a sus hijos de la misma forma.

Como cambiar para mejor

- *Reordenar y expresar con otras palabras.* Tome algunas expresiones típicas que se empleaban en su casa y entrégueles un significado positivo. Por ejemplo, "Deja de quejarte," se convierte en, "Por favor usa tu voz normal para que yo puede entender lo que me estás diciendo." Siga practicando y muy pronto lo hará sin pensar.

- *No hable cuando esté enojada/o.* Cuando escuche algún comentario negativo salir de su boca, deténgase. Si es necesario, salga de la habitación para evitar decir algo muy fuerte. Está bien el explicarle a su hijo que usted está demasiado molesta para hablar en ese momento, pero que lo hará luego de un momento. Tómese un tiempo para estar sola y pensar en palabras más suaves.

- *Adopte una regla de no herir.* Así como algunas familias tienen una regla que dice no pegar, lo mismo se aplica para prohibir el uso de palabras hirientes por parte de los hijos y de los padres.

- *Termine con el legado.* Trate de recordar que usted es una persona diferente a sus padres y que está determinada a criar a sus hijos sin el uso de palabras duras, y sin el uso de críticas y de gritos. El reconocer que existió un patrón de comunicación pobre durante su niñez es el primer paso para saber que tipo de cambios hay que hacer para mejor.

Comience un ciclo de palabras cariñosas

Es muy probable que las palabras que utilizamos hoy con nuestros hijos, sean las mismas con las que se les hable a nuestros nietos. Por lo tanto, es nuestra responsabilidad el iniciar un ciclo generacional de palabras cariñosas.

Aunque vamos a cometer algunos errores durante estos años tan valiosos, es importante minimizar los errores y seleccionar palabras que le proporcionarán a nuestros hijos auto-estima y confianza. Algunas de las cosas que le dice ahora, le quedarán grabadas en su memoria por mucho tiempo. Aproveche la oportunidad para que los recuerdos sean de conversaciones cálidas en un hogar lleno de interminables, "te quieros."

Los Sí y los No en la comunicación con el preescolar

- Para hablar con el preescolar, debiera agacharse y quedar al mismo nivel de sus ojos.
- Tiene que hablar con su hijo en forma educada, de la misma manera en que lo hace con los niños de otras personas.
- Debe comunicarse con su hijo por medio de mensajes en primera persona, osea, YO. Estos se concentran en lo que usted necesita del niño y no en las fallas personales que él pueda tener. Por ejemplo, con una frase como, "Yo necesito que guardes tus juguetes antes de la cena," se obtienen más resultados con la siguiente, "Siempre dejas tus juguetes botados por todas partes."
- Tiene que hablar con su hijo de la misma forma en que usted quiere que él hable. Si utiliza mucho los modismos y algunas malas palabras, puede garantizar que él hará lo mismo.
- Tiene que pedirle disculpas al niño si ha herido sus sentimientos. Si le ha gritado o le ha dicho algo y ahora esta arrepentido, dígale que perdió la paciencia y que lo perdone.

- No obligue a que su hijo pida disculpas si ha hecho algo malo. El que diga esas palabras no significa que en verdad las sienta. Las disculpas forzadas no son verdaderas disculpas.
- No compare a su hijo con otros niños.
- No hiera a su hijo por medio de la comunicación no verbal. El poner los ojos en blanco o hacerlos girar, o dar un suspiro frustrado cuando le habla, le dice inmediatamente al niño que lo está haciendo perder la paciencia.
- No clasifique' a su hijo. El niño que está clasificado' con una descripción negativa, generalmente se ven así y puede que se comporte de esa misma forma. Los niños que están clasificados' como buenos, pueden encontrar difícil el vivir a la altura de esas expectativas.
- No le de sermones' al niño. Un simple explicación es suficiente. El niño aprende a distinguir cuando lo van sermonear' y se desconecta inmediatamente.

Katrina Katsarelis trabaja como escritora independiente y es madre de dos niños. Escribe una columna periodística sobre como criar hijos llamada, "Watching them Grow."

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
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Newsletter

11th Year of Publication

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Volume 11, Number 3 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *May 1996*

Social skills: learning to play together

Parents and teachers hear it often, sometimes with tears, sometimes with anger, "She won't let me play." Another common refrain goes, "They keep chasing me," followed by a flood of tears. Adults know that being left out or being bullied is painful, but what can they do about it? How can adults help children gain ideas for independent action, instead of learning to weep for help?

Children three, four and five years of age often have wonderful play periods with each other. They build ingenious hideouts by turning over a plastic slide, gathering big boxes and tires and covering it all with a blanket. Look inside and you see little faces mysteriously happy with "sand cakes" or a "magic monster machine."

These children have been able to find playmates who agreed as to what they were going to play. Even if the project turned from house to fort to jail before it became a final decision, these children engaged in teamwork. Someone may have been a leader, some arguments might have occurred, but they had a plan and cooperated, however stormily, to finish their project and enjoy it.

Adults who intervene wisely during such play times can help to provide lasting social skills. This begins early in the preschool years.

As two year olds join a preschool, they learn to trust the teacher when mother leaves. Next they must learn to trust other children while they play.

A toddler may go from angrily hitting another child, then running away, to hitting and then hugging apologetically. Adults should know that this is progress. When the child's vocabulary gets larger, adults can then say, "use your words."

When children of any age interact with each other in preschool settings it is expected there will be some experimentation. There are many ways to acquire a popular toy from another child — from grabbing it to pleading for it. Also a child can enter play in the dress-up area by plunking herself down in the doll bed or carrying the bed off to another location.

Special adult guidance is necessary when children seem to settle on consistent behaviors that don't work well for themselves (like being a sad loner) or don't work well for others, (like being a constant aggressor when others are playing).

Some teachers feel that conflicts involving rejection are important for children as they learn to develop social skills. Other teachers sympathize with the child who seems chronically rejected. They make the rule for all the children, "You can't say, 'you can't play'." These teachers do not want young children to learn to exclude others. They believe that this only sets the stage for biases and prejudices about the ways other people act or look.

To try and help a child who has been excluded from dramatic play with a pretend family, the teacher may suggest, "You could be a letter carrier delivering a package, or the Avon Lady with lipstick samples." While she can't guarantee that these ideas will work, she can make suggestions that the child may not have thought of.

Just as there are children who are born with musical or mathematical abilities, social skills come more easily to some. Children who do well socially often have an attitude of self confidence about their place among their peers. They are flexible if rejected. Such children have been observed to enter groups by playing quietly nearby until they are recognized and accepted.

But every play yard has its little roving warriors, energized by their growing sense of power from riding the trikes so well and so fast. They are ready to whack over a line of sand castles, or take over the already inhabited corrugated refrigerator box.

Those that cry for help, those that make others cry, and those who are naturally adept socially, are all learning something from the way adults understand and guide their attempts to work and play together.

Learning to accept a new player to a group and learning how to be a good player takes time for preschoolers and patience for adults.

In This Issue: Ideas for Adults...2;
Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

It's MY TURN!
NO! It's MY TURN!

Ideas for Adults

Helping children to substitute verbal for physical responses: Watch children under three for their growing ability with language. Express what the child feels in telegraphic form. "Mad. You are mad! Say that. Don't hit."

Use two puppets to act out an argument over a toy. Use the words, "Your turn" and "My turn." Refer to children as friends. "You made your friend happy with your hug." Young children don't hear long paragraphs of explanations about why something is right or wrong. Adults are more effective if they act firmly and with great expression, but talk simply.

Help the left-out child: The child who feels or feigns helplessness about joining a group or having a friend can become exasperating to adults if the child's need for help is overlooked.

When such a child is in a neutral mood, not upset about something, sit and help the child observe how others enter groups. One child may need to see how to state his needs louder and more assertively. Another should notice how using pleasantries is more successful than making demands. When you see the child make efforts towards independence, be sure to reinforce this conduct with praise.

Inviting another child to play at your home is helpful in overcoming your child's feeling of helplessness or the inability to play joyously. Put toys that your child finds hard to share in the closet, so your child's rights are protected, while providing time to gain experience working out problems.

When your child is reluctant to talk about an upsetting situation, describe what is happening, "You are so mad you can't talk. You want the girls to play with you and they won't. It's okay to be quiet and sad about this for a while. You figured out how to do that hard puzzle last night and you can figure this out too." It is always helpful to refer to a child's past successes, to instill confidence in the ability to tackle anything new.

Empower children to solve problems: When problems of play arise, stop the action right away. For example, take a ball that is being grabbed. Then describe what is happening. "Jane is crying so hard her face is red." "Chelsea is so mad she is biting her sweater." Then ask the children, "What shall we do about this?" When adults try this for the first time, children often look angry or blank. Just say, "I see you are too upset to think right now. Let's get a drink of water and then see if you have any ideas." Making it a habit to ask for children's ideas about play conflicts, gets them away from relying on adults to act as King Solomon.

When children say, "He hit me." It's a good rule of thumb to ask, "What happened before that?" There is often a confession, "I hit him," and the children take off, after the adult reminds them to use their words next time.

Teachers can use puppets to enact problems during circle time. Parents can use stuffed animals, or sit and play with toy figures. These can have a fight and the parent shows it settled in a way that is good for all.

Expect children to be fickle: Today's best friend may not be willing to play the next day. It's hurtful, but like any crisis, a learning opportunity. How to win back a friend, or be one to someone else challenges thinking skills. It's best for adults not to take sides, but just narrate what happens, or be empathetic.

Don't be afraid to set firm limits: So often, adults supervising children's play need to act swiftly, and according to their feelings. Children should know that adults are astounded at behaviors that are hurtful to others. "Stop! That hurts him. No more shovels for you!" is appropriate if the adult is upset by the child's behavior. However, if the adult can remain calm in this situation, he or she might sound like this: "It looks like you got so mad you couldn't talk — and you hurt her. You need to get stronger about stopping yourself. Yesterday I saw you yell instead of hitting. That was a better thing to do."

Sometimes count to 10: Children in a group often take off like a covey of birds, grabbing a toy or threatening mayhem. Like the birds, they often settle down again, before a teacher can get instructions out of her mouth. Outrageously insulting remarks at the lunch table may send a child into gales of laughter as often as tears. The adult should learn to count to 10 before interfering.

Use books: Good children's literature takes children into other families, other schools and other situations where they can experience through characters, the hurts and happiness that making friends brings.

One of the best resources for adults guiding children's play is a listing of books on different subjects, in order to know exactly which one is needed for a certain child. This source can be the children's librarian, a good bookstore, as well as ***Parent and preschooler Newsletter's*** Library Resources section.

Change the environment: Rather than trying to change the child, change the environment. It's obvious that if a crawling baby is knocking down a carefully made block construction, moving the block builder or the baby to a another place puts everyone in a better temper. In preschools, children experiencing difficulty with others might be given a supportive and sympathetic invitation to play in a different room or yard, given a different piece of equipment, or offered a long drink of water. It's natural to need a change of place and pace when learning something as hard as getting along.

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Adults are the models for good social relationships: Teachers model good social relationships when they are easy going about the chores of preschool work and have friendly interactions with other adults. Parents show children they care about neighbors, friends, and family.

Be tolerant: The child who seems to cause a storm over every social encounter may be a nuclear physicist some day. The child who mourns about every rejection may write sensitive poetry in the future. The one who demands the "fast trike" and rides it like a racing car, may turn out to be an outstanding sprinter in high school. It takes empathy, time and skill to help young children grow in their ability to relate to each other.

Bette Simons writes about preschool children and the adults who care for them, based on her experience as a training teacher in the Preschool Laboratory of California State University, Northridge, as well as in her own child care center in Woodland Hills, California.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Howdy Do Me and You: *Getting-Along Activities for You and Your Young Child,* by Linda Allison and Martha Weston. Little, Brown, 1996. A lively book about getting along with friends, neighbors, and family members, filled with activities that you and your child can do together.

Bullying: who picks on whom, and why? New York Times, 3/27/96. ***Enlisting a 'silent majority' to fight bullying.*** New York Times, 4/3/96. by Jane E. Brody. In her column entitled *Personal Health,* Brody writes two important articles on a subject that often perplexes parents and teachers: how to deal with bullies and their victims.

So This Is Normal Too? by Deborah Hewitt. Redleaf Press, 1995. This paperback was written to help guide parents, teachers, and providers in working out developmental issues in young children, such as separation, toilet training, and socializing. It includes chapters such as: *I Want to Play Too: Joining a Group of Players,* and *It's Mine, Mine, Mine: Turn Taking.*

Pathways to Play: *Developing Play Skills in Young children,* by Sandra Heidemann and Deborah Hewitt. Redleaf Press, 1992. This is a resource for teachers who want to support the hard-to-play-with child. It uses a 10-step checklist that pinpoints the skill a child is lacking, helping the teacher to assist the child to find the pathway to successful social skills.

You Can't Say You Can't Play, by Vivian Gussin Paley. Harvard University Press, 1992. Filling the pages with vignettes about real children, a creative writer and teacher mixes fantasy and reality as she expresses her philosophy about fairness and rejection.

For Children

Metropolitan Cow, written and illustrated by Tim Egan. Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Bennett Gibbons, a dignified little calf, makes friends with Webster, a little pig who is just his age. But Bennett's parents aren't happy with the friendship. What happens next makes some important points (always with a light touch) about compatibility among friends with different backgrounds.

How I Found A Friend, by Irina Hale. Viking, 1992. Two young boys who would like to be friends find a way through their two little teddy bears in this gentle story.

Jamaica and Brianna, by Juanita Havill. Sandpiper/Houghton Mifflin, 1993. When Jamaica wears hand-me-down boots, her friend Brianna teases her. Even when Jamaica gets new boots, it doesn't help the situation. She and her friend are angry with each other until they learn to tell each other about their feelings, and repair their friendship.

Spot Sleeps Over, by Eric Hill. Puffin Books edition, 1996. Spot, the charming little puppy, goes to sleep at his friend's house and they have a wonderful time playing together. But his mom knows that bedtime in a strange house will be smoother if she brings over his favorite possession. Toddlers will love this simple story with illustrations that include flaps to lift.

Titch and Daisy, by Pat Hutchins. Greenwillow, 1996. Titch goes to a birthday party, but he doesn't want to join the other children in singing, dancing, or even eating. He just wishes his friend Daisy were there. And then he finds her in an unlikely place! The two of them go on to enjoy the party and to make new friends.

My New Sandbox, by Donna Jakob. Hyperion, 1996. A little boy wants his sandbox all to himself, and chases everyone away. But soon it seems lonely in the sandbox and he decides to share it with some playmates.

Grandma's Cat, by Helen Ketteman. Houghton Mifflin, 1996. In this story in rhyme, a little girl tries to play with her grandma's cat, but is unsuccessful. When she chases and grabs him, the cat hisses and claws. She learns to use gentleness to win him over so that they can become friends.

George and Martha Round and Round, by James Marshall. Houghton Mifflin, 1988. There are five little stories about the two hippopotamuses, George and Martha. They may disagree, play little jokes on each other, and even feel angry, temporarily, but they always remain special friends. Other books in the series include: *George and Martha Tons of Fun*, *George and Martha Back in Town,* and others.

Margaret and Margarita, by Lynn Reiser. Greenwillow, 1993. In this delightful bilingual book, a wonderful friendship develops between two little girls in the park, although Margaret speaks only English and Margarita speaks only Spanish.

The Worst Person in the World, by James Stevenson. Mulberry Books edition, 1995. The famous author/illustrator tells about a man who lives by himself in a house surrounded by poison ivy. He meets the ugliest creature in the world who tells him that "if you've got a pleasing personality that's all that counts." The worst person doesn't believe the creature, about that or anything else. His turnabout at the end is completely believable, and is poignant as well as humorous.

Bibliography by Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Learning to Cook Together

Five preschoolers stand at a low counter near the kitchen area of the preschool room. Warm water, yeast, flour, salt...they take turns adding ingredients, stirring and watching as the flour thickens the dough for the bread.

Just as children can cooperate to play together, they also can use teamwork to cook together. Some recipes lend themselves to helping children learn this skill. Here are some guidelines for choosing a recipe which fosters cooperation.
Recipes in which:
√ ingredients are measured
√ ingredients can be added separately
√ everyone can have a turn to add ingredients, stir, etc.
√ it is safe for preschoolers to participate — no sharp knives needed for preparation — not near a hot surface
√ there are a variety of ingredients and aromas
√ it is a sensory experience (can be seen, smelled, touched, heard, tasted)
√ preschoolers can participate in every step of the recipe preparation
√ results can be eaten for snack, after preparation and cooking is completed
Examples: baked goods such as bread or cookie dough — salads, such as tossed salad or fruit salad

For you, as parent or teacher, to foster an atmosphere for a positive cooking experience, have a relaxed attitude. Spills and messes will be part of the process. There will be a need for a "clean up time." Some children will make a perfect shape with the dough, but most will not. Some children feel insecure about doing an activity, and will not want to help at all. They might just want to watch. You could make a few extra goodies, just to be sure each child will have something for snack.

Do set limits when cooking with preschoolers. When cooking at preschool, it's best to have a few children at a time in the cooking area. For example, when making rolls, have a rotating cookery area, where a few children come and shape their roll, and then return to "free play" or other activity. If you want to keep track of who made which roll, write each child's name on a chart in the position of their roll on the baking pan. While you're cooking, reinforce the rules: "Each person can stir 10 times. Count with me, 1,2,3...9, 10! Thank you, Cody. Megan, now it's your turn 1,2,3..." Let children taste at appropriate times, which is when you've set aside a specific time for tasting and hand-washing, and of course, during snack time.

At home, it might be fun for your youngster to invite a friend to join in the cooking activities.

Talk to your preschoolers while you are cooking with them; ask questions. What do you think will happen when we add the flour? Is the dough harder to stir? How will the dough taste after we add the salt?

One great thing about cooking together, is you've made something you can eat together! Here is a recipe for rolls that preschoolers can help you make the day before. The dough rises in the refrigerator overnight. The following day children can shape, bake and eat their rolls at snack time. Start early in the day, as the rolls must rise about an hour before baking. The flavor and texture of these rolls are wonderful!

Whole Wheat Refrigerator Rolls

1/2 cup warm water
1 packages yeast
1 teaspoon sugar
1 cups milk
1/3 cup margarine
6 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons salt
1 egg or 2 egg whites
3 cups white flour
2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour

Pour the water into a small bowl. Test a drop on your wrist to see if it is just warm, not hot. Your preschooler can add the yeast, 1 teaspoon sugar, and stir. Set aside. Youngsters can help measure and pour milk, margarine, sugar and salt into a saucepan. Heat just until margarine melts. Remove from heat and let cool to lukewarm. Pour milk mixture into a large bowl. Add softened yeast mixture. Preschoolers can help add eggs, and 1 cup each white and whole wheat flours. Stir with a wooden spoon until smooth.

Give everyone a turn. Add the remaining white flour and most of the wheat flour to make a soft dough. You might need to stir, if it gets too difficult for the kids.
Let the dough rest for 10 minutes. Then knead the dough on a floured board or cloth, by folding 1/3 of the dough towards you, pushing, and turning. Children will enjoy punching, pressing, and palming dough. Use enough flour to keep it from getting sticky. Continue kneading for about 10 minutes.

Place dough in a plastic covered bowl, or large (gallon-size) plastic bag. Zip or use twister tie, leaving enough room for dough to rise. Place in refrigerator overnight.
Shape rolls by cutting dough into 24 to 30 pieces. Let each preschooler shape into a ball or into a "snake" and then a knot, figure eight, braid, or other shape. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Cover with a dish towel; let rise 1-2 hours, until doubled in bulk. Bake in a pre-heated 400 degree F. oven for 15 minutes or until golden brown. Yield: about 2 dozen rolls.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
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two year..........72.00
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de mayo, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 3) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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Habilidades sociales: aprendiendo a jugar con los demás.

A menudo los padres y los profesores escuchan al niño decir a veces entre llantos y rabia, "Ella no quiere jugar conmigo." Otra frase muy común dice, "Me están persiguiendo," y luego un mar de lágrimas. Los adultos saben que es doloroso ser dejado de lado o ser intimidado, pero, que pueden hacer al respecto? Cómo puede un padre ayudar a que su hijo aprenda a actuar de manera independiente en vez de llorar cada vez que necesita ayuda?

Los niños de tres, cuatro y cinco años de edad, tienen etapas de juego maravillosas. Construyen escondites ingeniosos dando vuelta un resfalín de plástico, o bien juntando varias cajas de cartón y llantas, para luego taparlas con una colcha. Mire hacia dentro y verá esas pequeñas caras, felices con "tortas de arena" o una "máquina mágica de monstruos."

Estos niños han encontrado compañeros de juegos que han estado de acuerdo sobre lo que se iba a jugar. Aunque la idea inicial de construir una casa se convirtió en la construcción de un fuerte, y después en una cárcel antes de que hubiese una decisión final, estos niños ya habían iniciado un trabajo de equipo. Uno de ellos pudo haber sido el líder, puede que hayan habido discusiones pero así y todo tenían un plan y cooperaron para terminarlo y disfrutarlo.

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El adulto que interviene de manera sabia durante las horas de juego puede ayudar a que el preescolar adquiera habilidades sociales duraderas.

Cuando un niño de dos años de edad va a la preescuela, ella aprende a confiar en la profesora cuando la madre se va. Más adelante, tiene que aprender a confiar en los otros niños mientras juega.

En un momento dado, el preescolar puede pegarle a un niño y salir corriendo, y en otra ocasión, le pegará al niño y luego lo abrazará para disculparse. Los adultos deben saber que esto es progreso. Cuando el vocabulario del niño comienza a aumentar, el adulto puede decirle, "Usa palabras."

Cuando niños de cualquier edad interactuan entre sí en la preescuela, se sabe que habrá algún tipo de experimentación. Hay muchas formas de quitarle un juguete a otro niño, desde arrebatarlo hasta suplicar por él. Por otra parte, el niño también puede meterse en el juego, arrojándose encima de la cama de muñecas o llevándose la cama a otro lugar.

Guía especial por parte del adulto es necesaria cuando el niño adquiere formas de conductas que no son buenas para él (como ser solitario y triste), o que no son buenas para los demás (ser un agresor constante cuando los otros niños están jugando).

Algunos profesores creen que los conflictos que implican rechazo son importantes para los niños, a medida que desarrollan habilidades sociales. Otros maestros empatizan con el niño que es rechazado constantemente y hacen reglas para todos los niños, "No pueden decir, 'No puedes jugar'." Ellos no quieren que los niños aprendan a excluir a los demás. Creen que este comportamiento sólo ayuda a que más adelante, el niño se vuelva prejuicioso ante la forma de ser y la apariencia de los demás.

Para tratar de ayudar al preescolar que ha sido excluido de un juego de tipo dramático', en el que se simula ser parte de una familia, el profesor puede sugerir, "Puedes ser el cartero que va a dejar un paquete o la señora Avon que trae unas muestras de lápices labiales." Aunque no se puede garantizar que estas ideas funcionarán, puede sugerir cosas que el niño no pensó antes.

Así como hay niños que nacen diestros para la música y las matemáticas, las habilidades sociales son más fáciles para algunos preescolares que para otros. Los niños a quienes les va bien socialmente, casi siempre tienen más confianza sobre el lugar que ellos ocupan entre los niños de su misma edad. Son flexibles si son rechazados. Se ha observado que éste tipo de niño logra entrar a un grupo que está jugando solo en un rincón, es reconocido y aceptado.

Pero todo patio de juegos tiene sus guerreros', aquellos niños llenos de energía generada por el poder que significa para ellos montar el triciclo bien y rápido. Están listos para pasar por encima de una castillo de arena y tomar control de una caja de cartón.

Todos los niños que piden ayuda, aquellos que hacen llorar a los demás y los que son socialmente adeptos por naturaleza, aprenden algo de la forma en que los adultos entienden y guían sus intentos por trabajar y jugar juntos.

El aprender a aceptar a un nuevo compañero de grupo y aprender a ser un buen jugador' le toma tiempo al preescolar y paciencia al adulto.

Ideas para el adulto:

Ayudando a que el niño substituya respuestas físicas por verbales: Observe al niño de menos de 3 años de edad por su habilidad con el lenguaje. Exprese lo que el niño sienta en forma de cable telegráfico. "Enojado. Tu estás enojado! Dílo. No pegues."

continuará >>>>>>

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Utilice dos marionetas para actuar la misma discusión que los niños ha tenido sobre un juguete. Use las palabras, "Es tú turno" y, "Es mí turno." Refiérase a los niños como si fueran amigos. "Hiciste feliz a tu amigo con ese abrazo que le diste." El niño no entiende las explicaciones largas sobre lo que está bien o lo que está mal. El adulto es más efectivo si actúa de manera firme, con mucha expresión y habla de manera simple.

Ayude al niño que ha sido dejado de lado: El niño que se siente débil o que aparenta serlo cuando tiene que integrarse a un grupo o cuando tiene que hacerse de un amigo nuevo, puede volverse desesperante para el adulto. Esto sucede si el adulto no toma en cuenta la necesidad que tiene el niño de que lo ayuden.

Cuando este tipo de niño está de humor neutral' y no está enojado por algo, siéntese con él y ayude a que vea como los demás niños se integran a un grupo. Puede que el niño necesite aprender a como plantear sus necesidades de forma más fuerte y más asertiva. Por otro lado, el niño deberá darse cuenta de que el usar la gracia/humor tiene más exitoso que el hacer demandas. Cuando observe que el niño se está esforzando por ser independiente, refuerce esta conducta con mucho elogio.

El invitar a otro niño a jugar a la casa ayuda a que su hijo supere el sentimiento de desamparo o la inhabilidad de no poder disfrutar del juego. Guarde en el clóset los juguetes que para el niño son difíciles de compartir, así sus derechos' están protegidos. De esta manera tiene tiempo para adquirir experiencia y luego podrá resolver problemas.

Cuando su hijo no quiere hablar sobre situaciones molestas, describa lo que está sucediendo, "Estas tan enfadado que no puedes hablar. Quieres que las niñas jueguen contigo pero no lo hacen. Está bien que por un momento estés callado y triste sobre lo que pasa. Ayer en la noche descubriste como armar ese rompecabezas tan complicado, y ahora, también puedes resolver esto." El referirse a situaciones de éxito que su hijo ha tenido en el pasado siempre ayuda. Esto ayuda a que adquiera confianza para enfrentar desafíos nuevos.

Enseñe a que el niño aprenda a resolver problemas: Cuando surgen problemas relacionados con el juego, detenga la acción de inmediato. Por ejemplo, tome la pelota que está siendo arrebatada. Luego describa lo que está pasando. "Jane está llorando tanto que su cara está roja." "Chelsea está tan enfadada que se está mordiendo su chompa." Después pregúntele al niño, "Qué hacemos al respecto?" Cuando el adulto hace la prueba por primera vez, el niño generalmente se enoja o se queda en blanco. Sólo dígale, "Veo que estás tan molesto que no puedes pensar. Tomemos un vaso de agua y luego veamos si tienes algunas ideas". El hacer un hábito el preguntarle al niño si tiene algunas ideas para resolver los conflictos durante el juego, hace que deje de depender del adulto como su salvador.

Cuando el preescolar dice, "El me pegó," es casi un regla el preguntar, "¿Qué pasó antes de eso?" A menudo hay una confesión, "Yo le pegué" y el niño sale corriendo. Después el adulto deberá recordarle al preescolar que la próxima vez debe usar palabras en vez de pegar.

Los profesores pueden usar marionetas para representar los problemas que se manifiestan durante la hora de clases. Los padres pueden utilizar animales de peluche, o sentarse y jugar con figuras de juguete. Estas pueden tener una pelea, y luego el padre puede mostrar como se solucionó el conflicto para que todos quedaran contentos.

Hay que saber que el niño puede ser inestable: El mejor amigo de hoy, tal vez mañana no quiera jugar. Es doloroso, pero al igual que cualquier otra crisis, es una oportunidad para aprender. El ganarse un amigo, o el ser amigo de otro niño, es un desafío para el preescolar y las habilidades que tiene de pensar. Es mejor que el adulto no se ponga de lado de nadie, y que sólo narre lo que pasó o que sea empático.

No tenga miedo de establecer límites firmes: A menudo los adultos que supervisan a los niños durante el juego, necesitan actuar rápidamente y de acuerdo a sus sentimientos. Los niños deberían saber que los adultos quedan consternados ante conductas que hieren a los demás. El decir, "Detente!, eso le hace daño. No más palas para ti!" es apropiado si el adulto está molesto ante la conducta del preescolar. Sin embargo, si mantiene la calma, él o ella tendrá el siguiente tono, " Parece que te enfadaste tanto que no podías hablar...y le hiciste daño. Necesitas ser más fuerte y saber detenerte. Ayer te vi gritar en vez de pegar. Es mejor hacer eso."

Cuente hasta 10: Los niños en un grupo generalmente salen volando al igual que una bandada de aves, agarrando un juguete o amenazando a los demás. Al igual que los pájaros, luego se calman, antes de que la profesora pueda dar alguna instrucción. Los comentarios extremadamente fuertes durante la hora de almuerzo pueden causarle al niño carcajadas o mares de llantos. Es necesario que el adulto aprenda a contar hasta 10 antes de interferir.

Utilice libros: La buena literatura para niños los lleva a otros ambientes familiares, a otras escuelas y a otras situaciones donde pueden experimentar por medio de los personajes, el dolor y la felicidad que trae el hacer nuevos amigos.

Uno de los mejores recursos para los adultos que supervisan a los niños durante el juego, es una lista de libros de diferentes temas, para saber cuál es el que se necesita para un determinado niño. Esta fuente puede ser el bibliotecario para niños, o una buena librería al igual que la sección de recursos bibliográficos del **Parent and preschooler Newsletter**.

Cambiando el entorno: En vez de tratar de cambiar al niño, cambie el entorno. Es obvio que si su bebé gatea va a tumbar una construcción de bloques, por lo tanto, el mover al constructor' o al bebé para otro sitio pone de mal genio a todos. En la preescuela, los niños que tienen dificultades para jugar con los demás puede que reciban una invitación a jugar en una habitación o patio diferente. En otros casos, se les puede dar un juguete diferente u ofrecerles un vaso de agua. Es natural necesitar cambiar de lugar y ritmo cuando se está aprendiendo algo tan difícil como el saber llevarse con los demás.

El adulto es el modelo de las buenas relaciones sociales: El profesor es un buen modelo de relaciones sociales cuando es calmado y relajado acerca de las tareas del trabajo de la prescuela e interactua de manera amistosa con los demás adultos. Los padres le muestran a sus hijos que se preocupan por los vecinos, por los amigos y por la familia.

Sea tolerante: El niño que parece ser el causante de una tormenta' en cada encuentro social, puede que algún día sea físico nuclear. El niño que se lamente cada vez que es rechazado por los demás, en el futuro puede ser un poeta. El que demanda que le den el triciclo y lo monta como si fuera una carro de carreras, puede que en la secundaria se convierta en un gran atleta. Toma mucha empatía, tiempo y destreza ayudar a que el niño crezca y sea hábil para relacionarse con los demás.

Bette Simons escribe sobre preescolares y sobre los adultos que están a cargo de ellos, basada en su experiencia como profesora de entrenamiento del Preschool Laboratory of California State University, en Northridge, al igual que en su propia prescuela en Woodland Hills, California.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

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Newsletter

11th Year of Publication

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Volume 11, Number 4 — An International Resource for Professionals and Parents — June 1996

Don't forget to hang up your coat.

Preschooler Memory: In One Ear and Out the Other?

Don't forget to hang up your coat," reminded Monica's father as they came into the house from their walk. "Um," replied Monica as she went into her room. But when she took off her coat she was distracted for a moment by the thought of her favorite television show and dropped the coat on the bed. A few minutes later her father poked his head into her room, saw the coat half on the bed, half on the floor and sighed.

If children can remember all the characters in all the cartoon shows they watch, why can't they remember to put away their toys? If they can remember that two weeks ago you promised them ice cream, why can't they remember that two minutes ago you asked them to hang up their coats?

Whether it's milk left out of the refrigerator, lost clothing, or forgotten chores, some days our kids don't seem to remember anything. That's not really true of course; it only seems that way to frustrated parents and caregivers. But if we look at how children's memory works (or doesn't work) we can understand why our kids are so forgetful and how we can help them remember.

In order to remember anything our youngsters have to *notice* the information, *process* it in some way, *store* it, and then *retrieve* it when needed. Failure at any point along the way results in that most famous excuse: "I forgot."

Noticing Information
Parents know that when a child wants a particular toy he will notice all the advertisements and hundreds of other cues which remind him to ask for that toy. Children and adults notice things that interest them. Unfortunately, chores rarely interest them, so they don't remember them. They won't recognize that things are out of place so they don't hang up their coat, or pick up their toys. And when we ask them, "Didn't you see...?" they look at us blankly.

Children have a hard time remembering anything that is uninteresting to them. In one study youngsters were asked to remind their parents to do different tasks. The tasks ranged from fairly boring to a child (like doing the laundry), to more interesting (like buying candy). These two, three, and four year olds could occasionally remind their parents to do the laundry, but they were much better at reminding their parents to buy the treats. In fact, the youngsters remembered to prompt their parents to buy candy 70% of the time. Unfortunately, children seem to see few cues to remind them to hang up their coats.

Processing Information
After a child has noticed something, or we have brought it to his attention, he has to do something with the information if he is going to remember it. Young children do not yet understand the *process* of how to remember. Their idea of trying to remember something is to listen very intently or look

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very hard. They don't realize that it would assist their memory process to repeat the information, or think about it, or do something with it. So it really does go in one ear and out the other.

Young children find it difficult to process more than one or two pieces of information at a time. If you ask an adult to do three things, the adult will probably remember by repeating the instructions and counting the number of things to be done and deciding what order to do them in. "Okay I have to do the laundry, load the dishwasher and drive Sandy to her friend's house. First I'll put up the laundry, then drive Sandy. By then the laundry will be done and I can run the dishwasher." Can you imagine a child actually thinking about the things she has to do? They don't...so they don't remember.

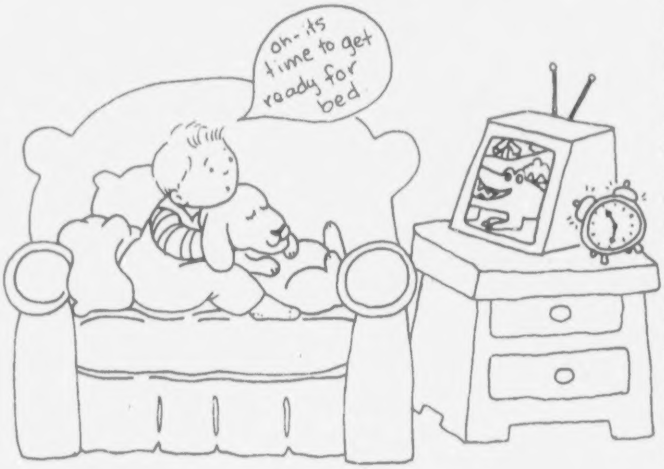
Four-year-old Sarah has just been asked to pick up her toys. She begs for a few more minutes of television and promises as soon as the show is over, she'll put them away. Does Sarah think to herself "Okay, I have to remember, after the show I'll put away my toys"? Probably not.

Five-year-old Evan needs to clear his dishes from the table and put his dirty clothes in the laundry. Does he think about which to do first and why? Again, probably not.

Getting things ready for school the next day. Remembering to call grandparents. These things require our children to think about their responsibilities and plan how they will do them. And children just don't do that. They don't yet have the mental capacity.

Children also have a smaller base of information to use in helping them to remember. Part of the reason we remember things better than our children do is that we have greater knowledge which we use to make sense of our experiences. Our children don't have that background and experience, so things don't make as much sense to them, and they simply forget them.

When the situation is reversed and our youngsters are the ones with the superior background they outshine us. Ask your youngster to generate a list of his or her favorite TV characters, or sports stars. Then see if you can remember these names. Unless you share this particular interest with your child her memory will probably be better than yours, and you might silently think, "This from a kid who can't even remember to throw the laundry into the basket."


oh- its time to get ready for bed

What does this mean in real life?

When we ask children to do several tasks, they listen to us, assure us they remember, and walk out of the room, forgetting almost instantly. Here are some ways to help them remember:

- Do it now. Time has little meaning for children and 'later' is a convenient way for children (and adults) to put off something they have no interest in doing. If they need to clean up their toys ask them to do it then and there.
- Do make sure you have your child's attention. Never compete with the TV, the dog, or a sister or brother. Get down to her level and maintain eye contact. Children have to notice something before they can remember it and they have to notice us before they can listen.
- Try to avoid asking a child to remember several things at one time. If a child must remember to do more than one or two things, make a list using pictures to remind her. Toys, clothes, animal chores etc. can all be triggered using pictures. The last item on the list can be a treat for taking care of all those chores.
- Help your child process the information by rehearsing it. This forces your child to think about, and interact with, whatever it is she must remember. For example, tell your child, "There are two things you have to do. You have to set the table and take your toys out of the living room. Now you tell me — what are the things you have to do?"
- If your child does have to remember to do something later provide a good cue for recall. For things which are to be done at home, a timer or an alarm clock works very well. Explain that when the alarm goes off the child has to put the toys away, set the table for dinner, or even get ready for bed.
- Make things part of an automatic chain of actions in which doing one action acts as a cue to the next. Getting up in the morning might include washing up, brushing teeth, getting dressed, then going in for breakfast (or whatever your family morning routine). If this becomes the standard routine it is far easier for a child to remember to brush her teeth before getting dressed. If it is something your child can practice in advance, let him go through the actions several times while you watch to make sure nothing has been left out. You are creating links and associations between actions so that one action will lead to the next.
- Use external reminders. Put their lunch someplace where they can't miss seeing it. If you can, hang it from the doorknob, then when they reach for the door knob, there's the lunch box. Do they need to remember to bring things on a trip? Try taping pictures of the items on the door.
- Helping them remember things to do when they arrive at preschool — like giving a note to the teacher — is a little more difficult. Home and school are very different environments, with nothing in common to jog your child's memory. The solution? Tell your child, "When you see your teacher I want you to remember to give her the note." Giving a note to the teacher can be triggered by the sight of that teacher. As a backup strategy put the note where the child is sure to see it — like taped to the sandwich wrapper in his lunch box.

It is important to be realistic about our expectations. Young children's memory will slowly get better. But it is true that they are never going to remember easily to do things they find boring or trivial. However, there are things we can do to help them remember. And for us, a good sense of humor helps.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. is a research psychologist and writer. Her articles have appeared in publications nationwide.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Listening to Stories Children's Book/ Audiocassette Packages

In the following list of book/audiocassette packages, the reader has the choice of listening to the side of the tape with turn-the-page signals to follow along in the book, or listening to the side uninterrupted by signals.

Arthur's Baby, by Marc Brown. Little, Brown, 1993. Arthur isn't sure what the fuss is all about when he learns there is to be a new baby in the family, until he finds he can really help.

Arthur Babysits; Arthur Meets the President, by Marc Brown. Little, Brown, 1996. Here are more enjoyable Arthur adventures, with the author himself narrating. In the first book/audiocassette package, Arthur babysits for the terrible Tibble twins and keeps them amused by telling them spooky stories. The second packet has Arthur winning a contest and going to Washington to meet the President. Will Arthur be able to overcome his nervousness and deliver his speech with confidence? You know he will!

Dinner at the Panda Palace, by Stephanie Calmenson. HarperChildren's Audio, 1996. If you're a hungry elephant, a famished pig, or a ravenous hyena, you'll find there's always room for you at the Panda Palace, in this sprightly story in rhyme.

Jamaica Tag-Along, by Juanita Havill. Houghton Mifflin Carry Along Book & Cassette Favorites, 1996. Jamaica's feelings are hurt when her brother won't let her come with him to his basketball game. When she's playing by herself and a smaller child wants to join in, Jamaica lets him play, remembering how it felt to be excluded.

Peter's Chair, by Ezra Jack Keats. HarperChildren's Audio, 1995. This is the classic story of a little boy with a new baby sister. He watches his father paint his cradle and his crib pink. But not his favorite chair! Then Peter discovers that he has grown too big for his chair, and even helps his father to paint it for the new baby.

From Tadpole to Frog, by Wendy Pfeffer. HarperChildren's Audio, 1996. This Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science® book and cassette packet describes the process of the development from a tadpole to a frog in language young children can understand.

Sheep in a Shop, by Nancy Shaw. Houghton Mifflin Carry Along Book & Cassette Favorites, 1996. Those irrepressible sheep are shopping for a birthday present. When they find what they want, there's not enough money to pay for it. But they are creative and find something valuable to barter, in this lively adventure.

Shoes, by Elizabeth Winthrop. HarperChildren's Audio, 1996. So many kinds of shoes in the world! And this book/cassette packet tells about them in rollicking rhyme.

Morris the Moose, by B. Wiseman. HarperChildren's Audio, 1996. Morris is sure that the cow he meets is a moose like himself until he discovers the truth, in this appealing story with a humorous ending.

Eek! There's a Mouse in the House, by Wong Herbert Yee. Houghton Mifflin Carry Along Book & Cassette Favorites, 1996. When a little girl encounters a mouse in the house, larger and larger animals are sent after the mouse, with wild and funny results.

Harry and the Lady Next Door, by Gene Zion. HarperChildren's Audio, 1996. Harry, the white dog with black spots, loves all his neighbors except one: the lady next door who sings high and loud, making Harry's ears hurt. Harry solves the problem in a positive and surprising way.

Books on Audiocassette
The following tales are from HarperChildren's audio collection. The stories are told by the authors or by well known actors. A copy of the printed book is not included in the package.

Madeline and Other Bemelmans, by Ludwig Bemelmans. The stories of the resourceful Parisian schoolgirl have become classics. Madeline and other delightful Bemelmans characters come alive in this 52 minute audio as recorded by Carol Channing.

Angelina Ballerina and Other Stories, by Katharine Holabird. Five stories about Angelina, the mouse who loves to dance, are included in this 27 minute audio. The tales are performed by Sally Struthers.

Frog and Toad Audio Collection, by Arnold Lobel. Frog and Toad are great pals in Lobel's appealing books about their adventures. In this 90 minute audio collection, the author reads all four of the Frog and Toad books to delight the listener.

Tales by Beatrix Potter. For fans of Peter Rabbit, Benjamin Bunny, and Potter's other endearing characters, here are 19 of her stories read by Claire Bloom, on 4 cassettes, with a running time of 3 hours, 17 minutes.

Where the Wild Things Are, In the Night Kitchen, Outside Over There, and Other Stories, by Maurice Sendak. These imaginative tales by an award winning author have become classics. In this 45 minute audio, they are performed by Tammy Grimes.

The Dr. Seuss Audio Collection. Here are five stories by the beloved Dr. Seuss, including, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street.* They are read by noted actor Hans Conried, in this 37 minute audiocassette.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, and Other Stories and Poems, by Judith Viorst. Everybody has a bad day once in a while, and Alexander manages to get through one where everything seems to go wrong. Viorst's humor and understanding come through in this tale and the other stories and poems in this 54 minute cassette, performed by Blythe Danner.

Bibliography by Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Remembering to Recycle

At lunch time, Ciera opened the cardboard and clear plastic container, slid out the disposable plastic tray, and began eating slices of meat, cheese and crackers. She drank her box juice, unwrapped the cellophane from her package of oatmeal cookies, and popped the top on her vanilla pudding. When she had finished, Ciera threw away 1, 2, 3, 4, containers and a plastic spoon.

While it is convenient to use store-bought, ready-made lunches, there are some disadvantages. One is the cost, which can be twice as much as you would pay if you prepared the lunch yourself. Another is the number of packages which are thrown away and cannot be recycled. Recycling is an important issue. With the current emphasis on saving the earth by recycling and creating less garbage, preschool parents and children can play a part. Everyone can help.

This summer, whether your child attends day care or summer school, or if you pack a lunch for the park, here are some suggestions about how to use either less packaging, reusable packaging, or recyclable packaging. With a little planning, you will be able to help the earth and save some money, too.

If you don't have time in the morning, remember to set aside a few minutes the night before to prepare the lunch pack. Instead of a pre-made lunch of meat, crackers and cheese, Ciera could have helped to pack a reusable container of nutritious foods: juice in a non-breakable thermos, one of the lunch time combinations listed below, and fresh fruit. Instead of individually packaged cookies, Ciera could have chosen one from a large-size package or from the family cookie jar, and wrapped it in her napkin, or tin foil which is recyclable. (If a messy item is wrapped in tin foil, the foil needs to be washed before recycling.)

Please note, Ciera must remember to bring home the reusable containers, and any utensils, so that they can be used again. If the facility she attends doesn't have a recycling center, she will need to bring home the recyclable items. You might discuss this with Ciera and her preschool teacher/daycare provider. If necessary send a note, until Ciera gets into the habit of remembering.

It just makes sense to:
- use less packaging, plastic bags, and throw away items
- use more reusable containers, and more recyclable items
- plan your take-along lunches and snacks and buy the items you need in large-size packages

Go-Togethers
While your preschooler has his own personal taste, your family may want to explore low-fat, low-sodium cheeses that are now available. Here are some ideas for terrific lunch-time combinations. Check off the ones you and your preschooler would like to try and add juice, fruit, and fresh vegetables (carrot sticks, celery sticks, etc.)

√ turkey, Swiss cheese, rye crackers
√ tuna fish, Gouda cheese, wheat crackers
√ strawberries/banana, cottage cheese, melba toast
√ ham, American cheese, sesame crackers
√ carrot sticks, Muenster cheese, animal crackers
√ chicken, Monterey-jack cheese, tortilla chips
√ peaches, cottage cheese, graham crackers
√ tossed green salad, parmesan cheese, bread sticks
√ apple slices, peanut butter, rice cakes

Preparation
You may prepare the food in several ways. Spread cheese on crackers and peanut butter on rice cake. Pack cottage cheese in a bowl-like container. Cut cheese into wedges, bars, bite-sized pieces, or slices. Cut sliced cheese to fit on crackers. Pack fruit washed, and prepared for eating (with the exception of the banana, which is left in the peel until time to eat). Sprinkle parmesan cheese on salad. Pack salad dressing separately. Remember to include a spoon and fork.

Ciera finished the last drop of her juice. Then she carefully placed her thermos and the other containers back in her lunch box. She remembered what her parents had told her about reusing the containers the next day. She smiled.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

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Pp
Parent
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de junio, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 4) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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La memoria del preescolar: Entra por un oído y sale por el otro?

"No te olvides de colgar tu abrigo," dice el papá de Mónica antes de llegar a la casa luego de una caminata. "Sí," respondió ella al entrar a su habitación, pero cuando se quitó el abrigo se distrajo por un momento al pensar en su programa de televisión favorito, y dejó el abrigo en la cama. Minutos después, el padre se asomó por la puerta de su cuarto, vio el abrigo medio en la cama y medio en el piso y suspiró.

Si al ver su programa de dibujos animados preferido el niño puede recordar los nombres de todos los personajes, entonces, ¿porqué no puede acordarse de guardar sus juguetes? Además, si puede recordar de que hace dos semanas usted le prometió un helado, ¿porqué no puede recordar que hace dos minutos le dijo que colgara su abrigo?

Ya sea la leche que no guardó en la nevera, ropa que se le perdió o alguna tarea que se olvidó de hacer, hay días que parece que los niños no recuerdan nada. Obviamente esto no es verdad, pero a veces parece serlo, en especial para los padres y para las personas que están a su cargo. Si observamos como funciona la memoria de un niño (o como no funciona) podemos entender porqué nuestros hijos son tan olvidadizos y como aprender a ayudarlos.

Para poder recordar algo, los niños tiene que *notar* la información, luego tienen que *procesar* la información de alguna manera, *almacenarla* y *recuperarla* cuando la necesitan. El fracaso de cualquier etapa de este proceso, da como resultado la excusa más escuchada de todas... "me olvidé."

Haciendo Notar la Información: Los padres saben que cuando un niño quiere un juguete determinado, pondrá atención a todos los avisos publicitarios y a cientos de otras señales que le harán recordar pedir ese juguete. Los niños y los adultos se dan cuenta solamente de las cosas que les interesan. Desafortunadamente, rara vez se interesan por hacer quehaceres domésticos y por eso no los recuerdan. El preescolar no reconoce que algunas cosas están fuera de lugar, y por lo tanto, no cuelga su abrigo, o no recoge los juguetes, y cuando le preguntamos, "No viste....?" nos mira desconcertado.

Los niños tienen dificultades para recordar las cosas que no les parecen interesantes. En un estudio, se le pidió a un grupo de preescolares que hicieran recordaran a sus padres el hacer diferentes tareas. Estas variaban desde los quehaceres considerados por los niños como los más aburridos (dejar la ropa para lavar) hasta los más interesantes (ir a comprar caramelos). Los niños de 2, 3 y 4 años de edad podían ocasionalmente hacer recordar a sus padres que tenían que lavar la ropa, pero eran mucho más eficientes cuando tenían que recordarles que compraran golosinas. Además, el estudio demostró que un 70% de las veces, los niños estaban mucho más dispuestos a recordarle a sus padres de que tenían que comprar caramelos. Desafortunadamente, el preescolar ve muy pocas señales que le hagan recordar de que tienen que colgar su abrigo.

Procesando la Información
Luego de que el niño ha notado la información, o hemos hecho que le ponga atención, él tiene que hacer algo con esta información si es que va a recordarla. Los niños más jóvenes todavía no entienden el proceso de hacer recordar. Su idea de tratar de recordar algo consiste en escuchar atentamente o en observar detenidamente. No se dan cuenta de que el repetir la información, pensar o hacer algo con esa información, ayudará a su memoria. Entonces, es cierto que lo que les entra por el un oído, les sale por el otro.

Para los niños pequeños es muy difícil procesar mas de uno o dos tipos información. Si le pedimos a un adulto que haga tres cosas, es probable que recuerde lo que tiene que hacer repitiendo las instrucciones o contando el número de cosas que tiene que hacer y el orden en que las tiene que llevar a cabo. "Bueno, tengo que lavar la ropa, poner los platos en la lavadora y llevar a Sandy a casa de su amiga. Primero lavaré la ropa y luego llevaré a Sandy. Para ese entonces la ropa estará lista y podré llenar la lavadora de platos." ¿Puede imaginarse a un niño pensando en lo que tiene que hacer? No lo hace, por lo tanto, no recuerda.

continuará >>>>>>

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A Sarah de cuatro años de edad, recién se le dijo que recogiera sus juguetes. Ruega que la dejen ver televisión unos minutos más y promete que una vez terminado el programa, los guardará. ¿Sarah se dirá a sí misma, "Bueno, tengo que acordarme de que después de ver televisión debo guardar mis juguetes?" Es muy probable que no lo haga.

Evan de cinco años necesita recoger los platos de la mesa y poner la ropa sucia en la lavadora. ¿Pensará en lo que tiene que hacer primero y porqué lo tiene que hacer? Es muy probable que no lo piense.

El preparar las cosas para la escuela al día siguiente, el acordarse de llamar a los abuelos, estas cosas requieren de que los niños piensen sobre sus responsabilidades y planifiquen cómo las van hacer, pero simplemente no lo hacen. Aún no tienen esa capacidad mental.

Los preescolares también tienen una base de información mucho más pequeña para ayudarlos a recordar. Una de las razones por las cuales los adultos recuerdan las cosas mejor que un niño es porque tiene más conocimiento, y lo utilizan para darle sentido a sus experiencias. Nuestros hijos no tienen ese conocimiento y tampoco tienen la misma experiencia, por lo que las cosas no tienen mucho sentido para ellos y simplemente se olvidan.

Cuando la situación se invierte y los niños son los que saben más, opacan al adulto. Pídale a su hijo que haga una lista con los nombres de sus personajes de televisión favoritos, o deportistas preferidos. Luego vea si usted puede recordar esos nombres. A menos que comparta el mismo interés que tiene su hijo por los personajes de televisión, es muy probable que él tenga mejor memoria que usted. Entonces pensará, "¿Todos estos nombres los sabe un niño que ni siquiera se acuerda de poner la ropa sucia en la canasta?"

¿Que significa esto en la vida diaria?

Cuando le pedimos al niño que haga varias tareas, él escucha y asegura que recordará lo que tienen que hacer, y luego se va de la habitación olvidándose en seguida. A continuación hay una lista de formas en que podemos ayudar a que nuestros hijos tengan buena memoria:

- Hazlo ahora. El tiempo no tiene mucha importancia para el preescolar y 'después' es una forma muy cómoda (también para los adultos) de postergar algo que no le interesa hacer. Si necesita guardar sus juguetes pida que lo haga en ese momento y ahí mismo.

- Asegúrese de que el niño le está poniendo atención. Nunca compita con la televisión, el perro, la hermano o el hermano. Agáchese y pongase al mismo nivel del preescolar y mantenga contacto visual. Los niños tienen que notar la información antes de poder recordarla y tienen que darse cuenta de nosotros antes de poder escuchar.

- Trate de evitar el pedirle a su hijo que recuerde varias cosas a la vez. Si es necesario que lo haga, confeccione una lista con dibujos para que lo ayude a recordar. Juguetes, ropa y tareas como el cuidado de su mascota, pueden ser todas gatilladas usando dibujos. El último detalle de la lista puede ser un premio especial por haber hecho todas las tareas.

- Ayude a que su hijo procese la información por medio de la práctica. Esto la obliga a pensar y a interactuar con lo que tiene que recordar. Por ejemplo, dígale, "Hay dos cosas que tienes que hacer. Tienes que poner la mesa y sacar tus juguetes de la sala. Ahora dime, ¿qué es lo que tienes que hacer?"

- Si el preescolar tiene que acordarse de hacer algo más adelante, entréguele señales para que lo ayuden a recordar. Para las cosas que tienen que hacerse en casa, un cronómetro o una alarma funcionan bien. Explíquele que cuando suena la alarma, él tiene que guardar los juguetes, poner la mesa para la cena o prepararse para ir a dormir.

- Haga que las cosas formen parte de una cadena de acción automática, en la que realizar una acción da pie para que se inicie otra. El levantarse en la mañana puede incluir lavarse, cepillarse los dientes, vestirse y luego desayunar (o cual sea su rutina familiar). Si esto se convierte en una rutina diaria, es mucho más fácil que el niño recuerde lavarse los dientes antes de vestirse. Si es algo que él puede practicar de antemano, deje que repita la acción varias veces mientras usted mira y se asegura de que no se ha olvidado de nada. Usted está creando vínculos y asociaciones entre acciones, de manera que una acción lleve a otra.

- Utilice señales recordatorias' externas. Ponga el almuerzo del preescolar en un lugar donde pueda verlo. Por ejemplo, cuélguelo en la perilla de la puerta para que cuando la abra, ahí lo encuentre. ¿Necesita acordarse de llevar algo al paseo de escuela? Haga la pruebe pegando dibujos de lo que tiene que llevar, en la puerta.

- El ayudar a que recuerden las cosas cuando lleguen a la preescuela — como el darle una nota al profesor — es más complicado. La casa y el colegio son ambientes muy diferentes, con nada en común que le ayuden a estimular la memoria. ¿La solución? Dígale al niño, "Cuando veas a tu profesora quiero que te acuerdes de darle esta nota." El darle una nota al profesora puede ser gatillado al verlo. Como estrategia de apoyo, ponga la nota donde está segura de que el niño la va a poder ver — como por ejemplo, el pegarla al envoltorio de su emparedado en la lonchera.

Es importante ser realista sobre nuestras expectativas. La memoria de los niños pequeños mejorará poco a poco. Pero es verdad que nunca les sera fácil acordarse de hacer cosas que no les interesan o les parecen triviales. Sin embargo, usted pueda hacer algo para ayudarlos a recordar. Y para nosotros, el buen sentido del humor ayuda mucho.

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Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

Pp
Parent and preschooler
Newsletter
A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

11th Year of Publication

Volume 11, Number 5 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — *July 1996*

Back to the great outdoors . . .

Michael sits in front of the TV set, happy to be entertained by the characters on his favorite show. When the show ends, he promptly declares he's bored. But when his mother suggests he go outside to play, he feels dismissed and resists the idea. So, instead, he goes to his room to play — even though the sun is shining and the temperature is warm.

Scenes like this are occurring more and more frequently in young children's lives. If it's not lack of inspiration that keeps preschoolers inside, it's likely to be lack of time. Not only do parents have less time to supervise outdoor play or to take their children to the playground, but children also have busier schedules these days. It all adds up to a generation of young children who spend much less time outside than their parents did.

Why be concerned? Lots of reasons! Not only is the outdoors the best place for preschoolers to practice and master emerging physical skills, but it's also the place where children are likely to burn the most calories, which helps prevent obesity. Also, the outside light stimulates the pineal gland, which is the part of the brain that helps regulate our "biological clock," is vital to the immune system, and makes us feel happier.

Preschoolers also learn through their senses. Outside there are different and wonderful things for them to *see* (animals and birds), to *hear* (the wind rustling through leaves), to *smell* (flowers and rain-soaked ground), to *touch* (a fuzzy caterpillar or the bark of a tree), and even to *taste* (newly fallen snow or a raindrop on the tongue). Children who spend a lot of time acquiring their experiences through television, computers, and even books are using only two senses (hearing and sight) which can seriously affect their perceptual abilities.

Outside, children are more likely to invent games. As they do, they're able to express themselves and learn about the world in their own way. They feel safe and in control, which promotes autonomy, decision-making, and organizational skills. Inventing rules for games (as preschoolers like to do) promotes an understanding of why rules are necessary. Later, sidewalk and sandlot games teach physical coordination, cooperation, and mastery. Although the children are just playing to have fun, they learn:
- communication skills and vocabulary (as they invent, modify, and enforce rules)
- number relationships (as they keep score and count)
- social mores (as they learn to play together)

All of this helps advance physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Then, too, there's the aesthetic value of the outdoors. *Aesthetic awareness* means a heightened sensitivity to the beauty around us. Because the natural world is filled with beautiful sights, sounds, and textures, it's the perfect resource for the development of aesthetics in young children.

And, of course, what better place than the outdoors for children to be loud and messy and boisterous? Outside they can run and jump and yell, and expend some of the energy that is usually inappropriate — and often annoying — indoors.

Think back to your own childhood. Chances are, some of your fondest memories are of outdoor activities and places. Perhaps you had a favorite climbing tree or a secret hiding place. Maybe you remember jumping rope or learning to turn cartwheels with your best friend, or playing fetch with the family dog. Do you recall the smell of lilacs, the feel of the sun on the first day warm enough to take off your jacket, or the taste of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich eaten on a blanket in the yard?

Think back. . . and then think of just how much you'd like your preschooler to someday have similar childhood memories.

Rae Pica is a movement consultant who has fond memories of trees: weeping willows at the park, the pear tree in the backyard, and getting stuck in a neighbor's elm. She is the author of the Moving & Learning Series (Human Kinetics: 800/747-4457), and of Experiences in Movement *(Delmar: 800/347-7707), and conducts movement and music workshops for parent and early childhood groups throughout the country.*

In This Issue: Suggestions for Parents...2; Library Resources...3; Preschooler in the Kitchen...4

Suggestions for parents

Children usually have the same values as the important adults in their lives. When you show an appreciation for the great outdoors, your preschooler will follow your lead.

Share your childhood memories of time spent outdoors — and then take your child outside! She's less likely to feel dismissed or punished by the words "Go out and play" if you go out with her. Teach her the games you used to play. Bring a blanket outside and have a picnic lunch. Lie in the grass and find the "creatures" in the clouds.

A nature walk is a great way to enhance your child's appreciation of the natural environment. Point out the sights and sounds and smells. Encourage him to touch — to discover the smoothness of a rock, the roughness of bark, and the fragility of a dried leaf. For a young child, these are science experiments.

A "listening" walk makes for a wonderful sound discrimination activity. As you walk with your child, point out the sounds of the birds, passing cars, whistling wind, even your footsteps on the sidewalk. What sounds can your preschooler identify on her own? Which are loud and which are soft? Which are high and which are low? What are her favorite sounds? (You might even want to take a tape recorder along so she can try to identify the sounds at a later time.)

Is the library or park within walking distance? Then don't take the car! And if your preschooler absolutely can't miss his favorite TV show, tape it and schedule viewing for a rainy day.

Plan play dates, perhaps taking turns with other parents, so your child has lots of opportunity to play with other children. Not only is the social interaction important, but playing in groups offers a chance to do things one child can't do alone. For example, they can take part in circle games and parachute play (where children gather around a large, circular piece of fabric — an old sheet will do — shaking it, circling it, making waves with it, and such (see resources, page 3).

This helps to foster cooperation and develop large muscle skills. Playing with others also means your preschooler will have a chance to practice emerging manipulative skills, like throwing and catching. But try to avoid any temptation to impose adult rules on the games children play; they're happiest and learning the most — when they make up their own.

For those times when your preschooler will be playing alone, make sure she has a range of materials available. Balls in a variety of shapes and sizes ensure practice with throwing and kicking, and a sheet tacked to the side of the house makes a "can't-miss" target. Large, empty plastic soda bottles are also great targets and enhance a preschooler's burgeoning knowledge of cause and effect.

Let your child play with sand and water. Water painting ("painting" the side of the house with a brush and a bucket of water) exercises arms and upper torso while teaching about wet and dry, light and dark, and evaporation. Chasing bubbles gives children a chance to run and enjoy watching the bubble burst.

An obstacle course made with old tires, large appliance boxes, and tree stumps teaches important concepts, like over, under, through, and around. Pumping a swing helps develop one of the body's midlines and promotes understanding of the concepts of high and low, forward and backward.

Of course, you can't forget the tried and true tools of childhood: the jump rope and the tricycle. By five, preschoolers have generally acquired the skill of skipping rope. And from the time they're two, children love riding small-wheeled toys, which gives them a chance to move across space under their own power.

A balance beam offers new and exciting challenges for preschoolers. A low balance beam can be purchased, or a plank or two-by-four placed on the ground. Encourage your child to move along the beam in forward, backward, and sideward directions, at high and low levels. Present open-ended challenges that foster divergent thinking and creativity. For example, ask him to find at least two different ways to move along the beam at a low level (like creeping on hands and knees and scooting on his bottom).

Challenge her to find three different ways to get over the beam (she might respond by slithering over it on her tummy, stepping over it, and jumping over it). And remember, it is the *process* more than the product that matters most in a young child's explorations and education.

Constant practice and continual mastery of skills in all areas of motor development are critical at the preschool stage, and there's no better place for both to occur than the outdoors. So discourage "couch potatoism!" Shut off the TV, save the housework and chores for another time, take your preschooler by the hand, and go out to play!

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults:

Playgrounds: Safe & Sound, NAEYC Order #552 (800) 424-2460. Designed for parents and professionals who share responsibility for children who use our playgrounds, this brochure provides information as to supervision of children, equipment safety, surfacing materials, and other important topics.

Sharing Nature with Children, by Joseph Bharat Cornell. Ananda Press, 1982. The emphasis in this book is on developing a love and respect for nature, but it also includes examples of nature games to play with children.

The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book, by Bob Gregson. Fearon, 1984. This book offers 133 games for groups of 10 to 30 children. Promoting both group interaction and individual self-expression, the games are designed for sunny, snowy, and windy days, and for tight spots as well as wide open spaces.

Mud, Sand and Water, by D.M. Hill. NAEYC Order #308. This book offers philosophical as well as practical discussions related to the joys of playing with these natural resources.

The Outside Play and Learning Book, by Karen Miller. Gryphon House, 1989. A thick book filled with ideas for outdoor activities, including dramatic play, creative art, games, and things to do with sand, mud, and water, among others. Suggested ages are listed, along with materials needed, and learning objectives.

The Great Outdoors: Restoring Children's Right to Play Outside, by M.S. Rivkin. NAEYC Order #108, 1995. Rivkin's book "sounds the call" to restore children's outdoor play opportunities.

"Outdoor Play: Observing Children's Learning," by Sara Wilford. In ***Scholastic Early Childhood Today,*** April, 1996. An interesting photo essay that illustrates how different aspects of children's outdoor play provide rich learning possibilities.

Hug a Tree and Other Things to Do Outdoors with Young Children, by Robert Rockwell, Robert Williams, and Elizabeth Sherwood. Gryphon House, 1983. Guide children on a magical discovery tour of the outdoors. Activities indicate appropriate age, include a list of vocabulary words, and develop skills like observation, counting, classifying, recording, and measurement.

Parachute Play, by Liz and Dick Wilmes. Building Blocks Publications, 1985. Lots and lots of parachute games geared to preschool children. It also includes information on how to introduce the parachute to children.

Bubbles, by Bernie Zubrowski. Little, Brown and Company, 1979. This book was developed at the Boston Children's Museum and offers many ideas for blowing bubbles and having fun with them.

Books for Children:

Those Summers, by Aliki. HarperCollins, 1996. Oh, the delicious memories of summers gone by when you and your family collected shells on the beach, plunged into the waves, built sand castles, and ate sandy sandwiches. Those carefree days outdoors are reborn in this happy trip to the seaside.

Hide and Seek In the Sand, by Kate Burns. Little, Brown, 1996. This Pull-the-Tab and Lift-the-Flap book is full of delightful surprises for young children, as they participate in the adventures of two young children playing at the beach. The brightly colored illustrations are by Dawn Apperley.

One Hot Summer Day, by Nina Crews. Greenwillow, 1995. With collage illustrations made from color photographs taken by the author, this lively and beautiful book shows a little African American girl running, eating and dancing in the city streets on a hot summer day.

Rain Song, by Lezlie Evans. Houghton Mifflin, 1995. In this sprightly story in rhyme, two little girls watch the rainstorm from indoors, and then go out wearing their galoshes and yellow slickers and splash happily in the puddles.

On the Move, by Deborah Heiligman. HarperCollins, 1996 (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science® Stage 1). In this celebration of all the ways our bodies can move, a young child takes you through his active day of outdoor play.

Snow Day! by Barbara M. Joosse. Clarion, 1995. The school bus can't get through, so the whole family stays home and enjoys the fun of playing in the snow.

Let's Go, Froggy! by Jonathan London. Viking, 1994. Spring is here and Froggy and his father plan a bike trip and picnic together. But before they can leave, Froggy must find his helmet, butterfly net, and other items to pack on their trip. When will he finally be ready? Just in time, in this humorous story.

Let's Go Riding in Our Strollers, by Fran Manushkin. Hyperion Paperbacks, 1993. The world is abuzz with sights and sounds as two toddlers are wheeled in their strollers through the city streets to the park.

Bibliography by Rae Pica
and Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Ten Ways to Keep Cool This Summer

One of the best things about summer is that it's O.K. to get wet. It's also O.K. to spend time pursuing the comfort of just being cooler. Here are ten ways for you and your preschooler to keep cooler in the kitchen and out, and have some fun as well

1. *Drink!* Plenty of water, liquid, juicy fruits, hot soups. Be sure to provide opportunities for you and your preschooler to enjoy a nice cool drink: at home, in the park, on a walk. There are lots of containers currently on the market for drinks. Drinks with tops that pop, or squirt — sippy cups with tops that aren't messy in the car. Manufacturers make non-breakable cups with attached straws, or insulated sides. Take advantage of these important accessories not only for your preschooler, but for yourself.

2. *Cook Less.* Serve more cold foods, such as salads, or more top-of-the stove cooking rather than baking where the oven can heat up the whole room. Barbecue outdoors . Play with your preschooler outdoors while the food is cooking. Cook bigger batches of items that freeze well or reheat well, such as rice, spaghetti sauce, or vegetable casserole.

3. *Set up a Lemonade Stand.* If your neighborhood allows you to have a drink stand, older preschoolers might enjoy playing at owning their own business. Modern lemonade stand owners might want to serve flavored waters, or juice, to cut down on sugary drinks. Help your preschooler set up a table in the shade with a chair and sign noting what's for sale and how much. Limit the amount of time your preschooler is out in the heat, and supervise some of the business transactions.

4. *Try Pretend Cooking.* Bring a pan or plastic bowl with cool water and spoon outside. Sit on the grass, a blanket, or at a picnic table. Encourage your preschooler to stir with the spoon, or his hand, and add "ingredients" such as leaves or twigs. Serve it up on plastic plates. Pretend cooking, pretend eating.

5. *Pour More.* Using non-breakable measuring cups, allow your preschooler to pour water from one to the other. This can be done outside, or on a counter, anywhere spills don't matter. Not only is this a fun activity, it helps with the fine motor control of learning how to pour.

6. *This is the Way We Wash the Doll Clothes.* Pick out a few of your doll or "action figure's" clothes outfits. Bring a tub of lukewarm warm, sudsy water outside. String a clothes line or rope between two trees or two posts. Let your preschooler dip clothes in wash water and out. After washing, secure the clothes to the line using regular clothes pins or doll-sized clothes pins.

7. *Baby and Me.* Take your preschooler and her baby doll outside for a fresh air bath. Use a tub of warm water, real shampoo and soap. Let your preschooler shampoo her baby doll's hair. After rinsing with the hose, let her comb and style her doll's hair.

8. *Artistic Creations.* Let younger preschoolers paint the sidewalk using a pail of water and a wide paint brush. For an older preschooler, first, use colored chalk to color the sidewalk. Then, let him use a paint brush to lighten the colors in his creation, or to erase it! Be sure to see his picture first.

9. *Boat Race.* Make your preschooler a sail boat using cork or tin foil for the bottom and a toothpick and paper for the sail. Fill a tub with water and stage a race. Whoever can blow the hardest will probably win!

10. *Tea Party.* Take a tub of warm, soapy water outside. Help your preschooler wash her child-sized tea set. Rinse in clear, warm water and dry with a dish cloth. Then serve a cool drink and fresh fruit on your sparkling clean tea set. Invite a teddy bear.

However you spend your summer, have fun while you're trying to keep cool.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)

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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$28.00
two year..........52.00
three year........75.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
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three year........99.00

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de julio, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 5) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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De vuelta a la vida al aire libre

Michael se sienta frente al televisor, feliz de entretenerse con los personajes de su programa favorito. Una vez que finaliza el programa, declara que está aburrido. Pero cuando su madre le sugiere que vaya a jugar afuera, se siente rechazado y se resiste a la idea. En vez, se va a su habitación a jugar — a pesar de que hay sol afuera y el clima está agradable.

Este tipo de situaciones ocurren cada día con más frecuencia en la vida del preescolar. Si no es la falta de ganas lo que hace que el niño se quedé dentro de la casa, es la falta de tiempo. No solo los padres tienen menos tiempo para supervisar a sus hijos cuando están jugando al aire libre, o para llevarlos al parque de juegos, ino que actualmente, los niños ambién tienen horarios muy ocupados. Esta realidad se raduce en una generación de niños que pasa menos tiempo al aire libre que cuando sus padres eran pequeños.

Porqué preocuparse? Existen muchas razones! El estar al aire ibre no es sólo el mejor lugar para que el preescolar practique y aprenda a dominar sus habilidades físicas, sino que también es donde quema más calorías, lo que previene la obesidad. Además, la luz de afuera estimula la glándula pineal que es la parte del erebro que ayuda a regular nuestro "reloj biológico." Esto es vital para el sistema inmune y nos hace sentir más felices.

Los preescolares también aprenden por medio de los sentidos. Al aire libre pueden experimentar un mundo diferente y maravilloso por medio de la visión (pájaros y animales), del oído (el viento crujiendo las hojas), del olfato (las flores y la tierra recién mojada), el tacto (una oruga peluda o la corteza áspera de un árbol) y hasta del sabor (la nieve recién caída o una gota de lluvia al caer sobre la lengua). Los niños que pasan mucho tiempo frente al televisor y obtienen sus experiencias por medio de éste y del computador — incluso hasta de los libros — sólo usan dos de sus sentidos (la vista y el oído), lo que puede afectar seriamente sus habilidades de percepción.

Cuando los niños están al aire libre, es más probable que inventen juegos. Mientras lo hacen, se pueden expresar y aprender sobre el mundo a su manera. Se sienten seguros y en control, lo que fomenta la autonomía, la toma de decisiones y la habilidad para organizar. El inventar reglas (lo que sí le gusta hacer al preescolar) ayuda a que el niño entienda porqué ellas son necesarias. Más adelante, los juegos en la acera y a campo abierto enseñan al niño a ser diestro en cuanto a la coordinación física y a la cooperación. Aunque los niños sólo juegan para pasarlo bien, aprenden:

- a desarrollar habilidades de comunicación adquiriendo un vocabulario más amplio(a medida que inventan, modifican y cumplen las reglas)
- relaciones numéricas (a medida que llevan puntajes y cuentan)
- habilidades sociables (a medida que aprenden a jugar juntos)

Todo esto ayuda al desarrollo físico, cognitivo, además de lo social y emocional.

Además está el valor estético que tiene el aire libre. El estar conscientes de la estética significa una mayor sensibilidad frente a la belleza que nos rodea. Debido a que el mundo natural está lleno de espectáculos visuales, de sonidos y de texturas hermosas, es el medio perfecto para que el niño desarrolle un sentido de la estética.

Y por supuesto, ¿que mejor lugar que el aire libre para que nuestros hijos griten, sean desordenados y bulliciosos? Afuera pueden correr, saltar y gritar, además, gastan un poco de esa energía que generalmente es inapropiada — y muchas veces desagradable — dentro de la casa.

Recuerde cuando usted era niño. Lo más probable es que sus mejores recuerdos sean de actividades y de lugares al aire libre. Tal vez tenía un árbol favorito para subir o un escondite secreto. Quizá recuerde cuando estaba aprendiendo a saltar la cuerda o a hacer volteretas con su mejor amiga, o cuando jugaba con el perro arrojándole una pelota. Se acuerda del olor de las lilas? del calor del sol el primer día lo suficientemente cálido como para quitarse la chaqueta? o del sabor de los emparedados de mantequilla de maní con mermelada, cuando los comía sentada sobre una colcha en el patio de la casa?

Remóntese hacia atrás y luego piense en como le gustaría que su hijo tuviese recuerdos de su infancia similares a los suyos.

Rae Pica es especialista en el aparato sico-motriz y tiene memorias muy agradables sobre los árboles, tal como; los sauces llorones en el parque, el árbol de peras en el jardín de atrás y el quedarse atrapada en el olmo del vecino. Ella es autora de la serie *Moving and Learning* (Human Kinetics: 800/747-4457) y de *Experiences in Movement* (Delmar:800/347-7707), además conduce talleres de movimiento y de música para grupos de padres y niños en todo el país.

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Sugerencias para los padres

Los niños generalmente tienen los mismos valores que los adultos los que son importante en sus vidas. Cuando uno le demuestra que aprecia estar al aire-libre, su hijo hará lo mismo.

Comparta aquellas memorias del tiempo que pasó al aire libre- y luego lleve a su hijo afuera! Es muy probable que se sienta menos rechazada o castigada si le dice, “Anda a jugar afuera” y en vez, la acompaña. Enséñele los mismos juegos que a usted le divertían. Lleve una cobija y organice un picnic. Acuéstese sobre el césped y busque figuras en las nubes.

Una caminata al aire libre es una buena forma de ayudar a que su hijo aprecie la naturaleza. Señale los paisajes, los sonidos y los olores. Estimule a que el niño use el tacto- a que descubra la suavidad de una piedra, lo áspero que es el tronco de un árbol y la fragilidad de una hoja seca. Para el niño, estos son experimentos científicos.

Un caminata sólo para escuchar’, es maravillosa para resaltar el mundo de los sonidos. Mientras camina, hágale escuchar los sonidos de los pájaros, el de los autos que pasan, el silbido del viento y hasta el de sus propios pasos sobre la acera. ¿Qué sonidos puede identificar su hijo? ¿Cuáles son los fuertes y cuáles son los más suaves? ¿Qué sonidos son altos, y cuáles son los bajos? ¿Cuáles son sus sonidos preferidos? (Puede llevar una grabadora para que más adelante su hija pueda reconocer los sonidos.)

¿La biblioteca y el parque están cerca de su casa? Si es así, no lleve el automóvil! Y si su hijo no puede por nada del mundo perderse su programa favorito, grábelo y dígale que lo vea un día lluvioso.

Organice citas para jugar, tal vez turnándose con otros padres de manera que el preescolar tenga oportunidad de jugar con otros niños. La interacción social es importante, al igual que el jugar en grupo porque se hacen cosas que no se pueden hacer cuando los niños están solos. Por ejemplo, pueden tomar parte en juegos de rondas y el juego del paracaídas’ (donde los niños se reúnen alrededor de un pedazo de tela cortada en forma redonda — una sábana vieja sirve — y la sacuden de manera que se formen olas y diferentes cosas (ver la página de recursos). Esto ayuda a fomentar la cooperación y al desarrollo de los movimientos que se hacen con los músculos mayores. El jugar con otros niños significa que su preescolar también tendrá la oportunidad de practicar las habilidades que tiene para manipular objetos, como el arrojar y el agarrar. Pero evite la tentación que significa el imponer reglas a los juegos de los niños; son más felices y aprenden más, cuando ellos hacen sus propias reglas.

En los momentos que el niño esté jugando solo, asegúrese de que tenga una variedad de materiales a su alcance. Las pelotas de diferentes formas y tamaños aseguran que practicará el tirar y patear, y una sábana pegada a uno de los lados de la casa hace un blanco excelente que no se puede fallar. Las botellas de plástico grande también son muy buenos blancos y realzan el conocimiento emergente del niño sobre causa y efecto.

Deje que juegue con arena y agua. El pintar con agua (“pintar” la muralla del lado de la casa con un pincel y un balde de agua) es un buen ejercicio para los brazos y para la parte superior del torso mientras se enseñan los conceptos de mojado, seco, oscuro, claro y sobre la evaporación. El perseguir burbujas le da al niño la posibilidad de correr y además, disfrutar al ver como se revientan.

Un circuito con obstáculos hecho con llantas viejas, cajas grandes y troncos de árbol, enseña conceptos importantes como; sobre, debajo, a través y alrededor. El empujar un columpio para darle vuelo ayuda al desarrollo de la línea media del cuerpo, y a que el niño entendiendo los conceptos de alto, bajo, adelante y atrás. Por supuesto que no puede olvidar las herramientas más usadas y queridas por los niños: la cuerda de saltar y el triciclo. Ya a los 5 años de edad, los preescolares generalmente pueden saltar la cuerda, y a partir de los dos años, les gusta montar sobre juguetes que tienen ruedas. Estos les dan la oportunidad de moverse en un espacio determinado, y a su propio ritmo.

Una viga de equilibrio le ofrece al niño retos nuevos y excitantes. Se puede comprar una viga de equilibrio baja o una tabla de 2 por 4 para poner sobre el piso. Estimule a que su hijo camine sobre la viga en diferentes direcciones, por ejemplo, hacia adelante, hacia atrás y de lado, además suba o baje el nivel de la viga. Pídale que alcance metas diferentes, aquellas que fomentan el pensamiento divergente y la creatividad. Por ejemplo, dígale que encuentre por los menos dos formas de moverse sobre la viga (como gatear sobre manos y rodillas y sentarse y deslizarse sobre la viga). Pídale que encuentre otras 3 formas de pasar sobre la viga (tal vez responda deslizandose sobre el estómago, pasando sobre la viga o saltando por encima de ella) Y recuerde, cuando los niños están explorando, es mucho más importante el proceso que el producto en la exploración y educación del niño pequeño.

La práctica constante y el dominio de las destrezas que forman parte del desarrollo motriz, son cruciales durante la etapa preescolar, y no hay mejor lugar que el aire libre para que ambas evolucionen. Así que desanime a su hijo a que pase horas tendido sobre el sofá viendo televisión. Apague el televisor, deje las tareas domésticas para otro momento, tome al preescolar de la mano y salga a jugar con él afuera!

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

Pp Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

11th Year of Publication

Volume 11, Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *August 1996*

Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go. . . *But how do we get there?*

According to a recent survey, more than a third of United States citizens cannot locate Canada on a map. An Atlanta newspaper reported that a ticket agent at Olympic headquarters refused a telephone order from someone in New Mexico because her office "does not handle requests from foreign countries." And when a prominent professional athlete who was traded to a Boston team was asked by a television interviewer how he felt about moving to New England, he replied, "I thought Boston was in Massachusetts."

THIS IS WHERE WE LIVE

The average person's lack of knowledge in the area of geography is appalling — but it is not surprising. After all, for most people, learning geography was strictly a matter of formal instruction involving nothing more than rote memorization. No wonder they failed to understand, much less appreciate, the subject fully.

It doesn't have to be that way. In fact, learning geography can be a lot of fun. As long as parents recognize and respect their child's developmental limitations and inclinations, they can easily put together a variety of play activities that make introducing this subject an enjoyable as well as enriching experience.

Furthermore, these activities can be initiated long before the subject of geography is introduced in school. Throughout the early years, there are plenty of opportunities to help children become familiar with general principles and even absorb some specific material.

What does an understanding and appreciation of geography entail?

Spatial relations, physical characteristics, landmarks, and labels are a few of the essential elements. How can these be transformed into meaningful and pleasurable experiences for a young child? As always, it is smart to start with something simple and familiar and then gradually move on to increasingly complex and far-reaching challenges.

For instance, by late infancy (18 months to 2 years) a child ordinarily is well-acquainted with her own home. Using cardboard and crayons, her parents can make little replicas of the major pieces of furniture found in each room; and then place the pieces appropriately on a large sheet of paper depicting the overall layout of the house. Depending on the size of your house, you can start with one section at a time, then gradually expand the activity to include the entire structure.

Of course, the child should be permitted to play with these materials at any time and in any way that she pleases. However, every once in a while, her parents can join her and play a special game. One version might be to have the child close her eyes while the parents remove a few pieces, and then ask the child to return the pieces to their original spots. Another version might be to tell a story about a little girl looking for a lost item in the house, and ask the child to act out the story on the paper using one of her favorite dolls as a prop.

As the child moves through toddlerhood the same type of games can be expanded to include not only the child's house, but her immediate neighborhood as well.

In addition, the parents can draw a rough map of the neighborhood; and then, while taking a walk through the real thing, the child can be encouraged periodically to stop and draw in pictures of the buildings, trees, and other major structures she sees. She also can be asked to "show how far we've gone" by using a bright red marker to trace a line between each starting and stopping point.

During the remainder of the preschool period, geography games can become infinitely more sophisticated. Maps can be prepared and the picture-and-line routine (described above) can be played in

continued >>>>>

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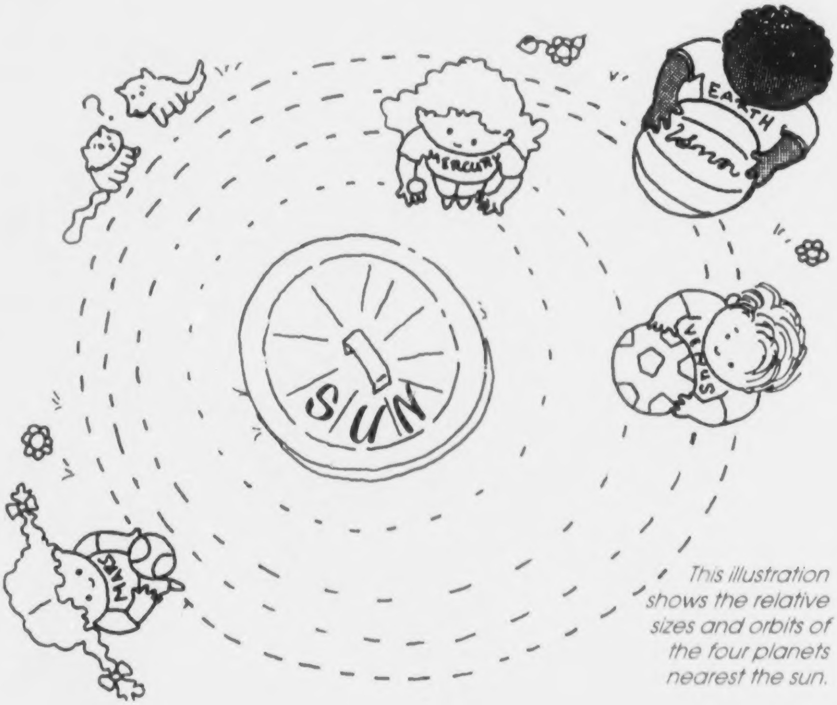
connection with anything from a short trip to the market to a long journey to visit Grandma and Grandpa in another state. And with each repetition of the event, greater detail can be added to the places pictured — possibly to the point of including the names of significant towns, streets, bridges, etc.

Once a route has been traveled repeatedly and these maps become reasonably complete, the parents can employ numbers to identify various areas. Then, instead of the child constantly inquiring "Are we there yet?" the parents and child can periodically discuss the question "Where are we now?" And instead of the child becoming impatient while waiting for the end of the journey, she can occupy herself by keeping track of "how many more numbers do we have to pass through before we get to Grandma's house?"

More advanced geography games

Meanwhile, the subject of geography can be extended to a national and even an international scale by employing a large map of the country and a world globe. Anytime an interesting location is mentioned in conversation, on television, or in a movie, the parents can use a sticker to show the child precisely where it is. Different stickers can be used to designate places where the child has been and places where she would like to go. And the child can be encouraged to attach small pictures or little toys to the stickers so she will be able to recall exactly what it was that initially motivated her to learn about that particular spot.



This illustration shows the relative sizes and orbits of the four planets nearest the sun.

It is critical to keep in mind that these activities are "games" and not "drills." Parents should always be prepared to follow their child's lead rather than a preset agenda; and the child should never be "required" to do anything. Furthermore, it is important to remember that the goal is not to have the child recite a long list of state capitals, but merely to have her gain a good feeling for the essential elements of geography through concrete experiences that are directly meaningful to her.

And don't forget that these activities are just suggestions. In promoting developmentally appropriate play, there is no substitute for the right-on-target knowledge that a child's parents are uniquely qualified to provide; and there is nothing more wonderful than the remarkable ingenuity exhibited by mothers and fathers who have committed their creative talents to the task of bringing pleasure to their child.

Extending geography lessons to outer space

There's the legendary example of the father who managed to take his preschool child's geography "lessons" far beyond the borders of the earth. When his four-year-old son became fascinated with "Star Trek" and outer space in general, the father decided to set up the solar system in the front yard. Using a beach ball, a basketball, a softball, a golf ball, etc., he collected nine "planets" that were of proportional size, and he laid them out in a way that approximated their relative distance from the "sun" (a huge aluminum garbage can cover).

His four-year-old was enthralled with the arrangement and continually asked questions about the objects and phenomena represented. For a while, given the fairly static nature of the display, the father had difficulty explaining certain concepts such as "orbit." He also noticed that despite a strong desire to do so, his son was having trouble keeping track of each planet's name as the discussion moved back and forth across the yard.

Suddenly, other kids from around the neighborhood began dropping by to take a look at the bizarre collection of balls in front of the house. The father gave each child a ball to hold and a "space name" like "Mercury" or "Venus" to use in a new game. Soon, he had the children moving their planets in big and small circles around the sun and calling out their special names as they passed each other.

Every weekend for the next several months, all the kids in the neighborhood would come over to the front yard to play "the planet game." And years later, when an elementary school science teacher started lecturing his class about the solar system, he was amazed to discover that some of his students already knew more about the subject than he would have expected.

As this story clearly illustrates, the easiest and most effective way to educate a young child is to teach her what she wants to learn when she wants to learn it, and to make sure the material is presented in a tangible and entertaining manner. And the most accurate way to measure a young child's educational progress is simply to note how much fun she is having.

Dr. Michael K. Meyerhoff, a former researcher with the Harvard Preschool Project, is the executive director of The Epicenter Inc., "The Education for Parenthood Information Center," a family advisory and advocacy agency based in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

Helping Your Child Learn Geography, published by the U.S. Department of Education in cooperation with the Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey. A booklet that suggests many enjoyable activities to help young children learn about geography. Contact: U.S. Government Printing Office, 710 North Capitol Street, N.W., Washington DC 20401. 202-512-0132.

Don't Know Much About Geography: *Everything You Need to Know About the World but Never Learned,* by Kenneth C. Davis. William Morrow, 1992. A lively and informative book that proves that it's never too late to learn.

Books for Children

Guess Where You're Going, Guess What You'll Do, by A.F. Bauman. Houghton Mifflin, 1989. An imaginative guessing game, giving clues as to what you would be taking on a specific trip. You, the reader, must use your reasoning powers to get the answer, which is then illustrated on the following page. For example: "Fill your tote bag with summer things: a tube of sunscreen, a big fluffy towel, and a comb to get the tangles.... Guess where you're going. Guess what you'll do."

Four Fur feet, by Margaret Wise Brown. Hyperion, 1994. With lilting rhythm, this book, newly illustrated by Woodleigh Marx Hubbard, tells a simple tale of a four-footed, furry creature who takes a walk around the world on his four fur feet.

Disney's Goofy Visits Pluto: A Book about the Planets, by Cathy East Dubowski. Disney Press, 1995. Fans of Goofy and Mickey will enjoy their trip on a spaceship where they learn many useful facts about the planets. The book ends with a humorous comparison of Pluto the planet with Pluto the dog.

The Big Red Bus, by Judy Hindley. Candlewick Press, 1995. There's a hole in the road and the big red bus is stuck. A van, a car, and many other vehicles can't go either because they are stuck behind the bus. With simple language and bright, bold illustrations by William Benedict, this lively story will appeal to very young children.

Looking Down, by Steve Jenkins. Houghton Mifflin, 1995. If you were out in space, looking down at the earth, what would you see? The imaginative collage pictures in this beautiful wordless book show you our planet out in space; then they move closer and closer to earth. Each illustration shows more and more details until you can focus in on... a lady-bug!

Round Trip, by Ann Jonas. Greenwillow, 1983. This book records the sights on a day trip to the city and back home again to the country. In an unusual format, the story runs from front to back; then, upside down from back to front!

If I Lived in France..., If I Lived in Germany..., If I Lived in Japan..., If I Lived in Spain..., by Rosanne Knorr. Longstreet Press, (Marietta, GA, 800-927-1488.), 1995. This series of four books tells children how their lives would be different if they were growing up in foreign countries. Would they play the same games? eat the same foods? Each book introduces young children to the daily customs and vocabulary of their peers in that country.

Walk Rabbit Walk, by Colin McNaughton & Elizabeth Attenborough. Tambourine Books, 1992. Eagle has invited all his friends to a party at his home on top of a mountain. While the other friends journey in a helicopter, a sports car, a hot air balloon, and other vehicles, they all discover that sometimes it's quicker to walk.

Drive Your Car, by Anna Nilsen. Candlewick Press, 1996. Preschoolers will love this interactive book in which they can explore the town in their very own car. A small cardboard car is provided for the reader to drive along the road. Turn the half pages in the book and you can drive down different roads as the pictures change. (Also, to explore the farm in your very own tractor, see, ***Drive Your Tractor,*** by the same author.)

Good Driving, Amelia Bedelia, by Herman Parish. Greenwillow, 1995. Go along with the well-meaning but literal-minded Amelia Bedelia as she drives Mr. Rogers' car to visit her cousin. Phrases like: "crossroads," "bear left," and "a fork in the road" will never again have the same meaning to you after you've read this hilarious book.

Small Bear Lost, by Martin Waddell. Candlewick Press, 1996. Small Bear gets left on the train by accident, but he looks at a map on the train station, and finds where his home is and where he is. After many adventures he finds his way home to the little girl who loves him very much.

Bibliography
by
Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go... *But what will we eat there?*

Do you visit grandma and grandpa in another part of the country, or the world? Have you taken your preschooler and perhaps pointed out that, "we eat shrimp here because grandma lives by the gulf"? Or, "this is a special recipe grandpa makes that his parents brought with them from a place all the way across the ocean!"

This is one way to help children understand about distances — by pointing out the different foods people eat in different places. Even in the same towns people eat similar, yet different foods because of their family or cultural heritage, their likes and dislikes, or their interest in nutrition. Because of modern transportation, food from around the world can be shipped anywhere — even into rural and remote areas of the country. We live in a rural town in Missouri, and I am delighted to see packages of tofu, fresh pineapple, and live lobster at the grocery store. Occasionally we indulge in an out-of-the-ordinary meal. But most of the time we eat what is most plentiful — and therefore most economical — in our part of the country: beef, pork, and chicken. These are low in price compared to fresh fish, which we enjoy eating when visiting grandparents in a coastal town where the price is also right.

How delightful to know that regional differences in food and flavor in the north, south, east, and west of the USA and the world are strong, despite the modern global community. People who speak the same language don't always describe the same food. We traveled to England when I was growing up. In a restaurant near the Tower of London, my sister ordered a "chicken salad." She expected a plate with boned, diced chicken in a mayonnaise-based salad dressing. She was brought a lettuce lined plate with a roasted chicken leg placed in the center. They also referred to cookies as "biscuits" and an afternoon snack as "tea." These differences make learning about other countries more interesting.

When you share your geographical knowledge with your children, remember to point out the locations of your favorite neighborhood restaurant, bakery, or butcher. Point out on a map of Iowa the place where you had "the most delicious sour-cream raisin pie." Or the city where your grandmother's apartment always smelled like onions when you came for dinner. Bringing these types of details into your daily conversation can help your child remember the places you've discussed and can be a time of sharing memories of your past.

When planning your menus, you might want to include a special regional dish. Include a meat, potato, pasta or rice, green vegetable, bread and dessert. These suggestions for typical regional dishes might help you get started. There are many I'm sure I have not included. Please add to the list. Your public library can help you find recipes you would like to try.

Northeast

- Broiled Maine Lobster
- Rhode Island Steamer Clambake
- New England Clam Chowder (cream-based soup)
- Manhattan Clam Chowder (tomato-based soup)
- Vermont Maple Sugar Cake
- Maryland Crab Cakes

South

- Southern Fried Chicken
- Baking Powder Biscuits/ Corn Bread
- Cheese Grits
- Virginia Baked Ham
- Florida Key Lime Pie
- Cajun Jambalaya (Chicken, Ham and Shrimp in a spicy tomato sauce)
- Gumbo (Chicken and okra soup)

Midwest

- Sauerbraten (marinated roast)
- Kansas City Strip (steak)
- Iowa Corn Pudding
- Rhubarb Pie
- Corn and Pepper Relish
- Black Walnut Pie

Southwest

- Texas Chili
- Tamale Pie
- Chicken Mole (Chicken with a spicy sauce that includes unsweetened chocolate)
- Enchiladas
- Chilies Rellenos (Chilies stuffed with cheese and fried)

Northwest

- Gold Rush Style Silver Dollar Pancakes
- Sourdough bread
- Barbecued Salmon Steaks
- Chicken with Pineapple
- Roast Venison
- Almond Cookies

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)
©1996 Preschool Publications, Inc
**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$30.00
two year..........55.00
three year........78.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
one year...US$40.00
two year..........75.00
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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de agosto, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 6) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.
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A la casa de la abuela vamos cruzando el río a través del bosque.

Pero, como hacemos para llegar allá?

Según una reciente encuesta, mas de un tercio de los ciudadanos de Estados Unidos no pueden ubicar Canada en un mapa. Un periódico de Atlanta informo que una agente de boletos en la sede Olímpica rehusó una orden por teléfono de alguien de Nuevo México porque su oficina "no atiende pedidos de países extranjeros." Y cuando un entrevistador de televisión le pregunto a un destacado atleta profesional transferido a un equipo de Boston como se sentía sobre trasladarse a Nueva Inglaterra, el contesto , "Yo pensaba que Boston estaba en Massachusetts."

La carencia de conocimiento del común de las personas en el área de geografía es pasmosa, pero no es sorprendente. Después de todo, para la mayoría de la gente, aprender geografía fue estrictamente una materia de instrucción formal que involucraba memorización por repetición. No es extraño, entonces, que no comprendieran mucho, menos apreciaran, totalmente el tema.

No tiene que ser de esa manera. De hecho, aprender geografía puede ser una gran diversión. Mientras los padres reconozcan y respeten las limitaciones e inclinaciones del desarrollo de su niño, podrán organizar fácilmente una variedad de actividades de juegos que hacen que la introducción de este tema sea una experiencia agradable así como también enriquecedora.

Ademas, estas actividades pueden iniciarse mucho antes que el tema de la geografía sea introducido en la escuela. A lo largo de los primeros años hay una abundancia de oportunidades para ayudar a los niños a familiarizarse con principios generales y hasta absorber alguna materia especifica.

¿Que involucra una comprensión y una apreciación de la geografía?

Las relaciones espaciales, características físicas, hitos, y etiquetas engomadas, son algunos de los elementos esenciales. Como pueden estos transformarse en experiencias significativas y placenteras para un niño pequeño? Como siempre, es sabio comenzar con algo simple y familiar y moverse gradualmente a áreas cada vez mas complejas y de largo alcance.

Por ejemplo, para finales de la infancia (18 meses a 2 años) un niño ordinariamente conoce bien su propio hogar. Usando cartulina y lápizes de color, sus padres pueden hacer algunas replicas de los muebles mas importantes de cada cuarto; y luego poner los pedazos sobre una hoja grande de papel que refleje el esquema total de la casa. Dependiendo del tamaño de la casa, se puede comenzar con un sector a la vez, y luego expandir gradualmente la actividad hasta incluir toda la casa.

Por supuesto, al niño deber a permitirsele jugar con estos materiales en cualquier momento y de cualquier forma que quiera. Sin embargo, de vez en cuando, los padres pueden sumarse al niño y jugar un juego especial. Una versión podrá ser que el niño cierre sus ojos mientras los padres quitan algunas piezas, y luego le pidan al niño que vuelva las piezas a sus lugares originales. Otra versión podrá ser contar una historia sobre una pequeña niña que busca un articulo perdido en la casa, y pedirle a la niña que actúe la historia en el papel usando una de sus muñecas favoritas como ayuda.

A medida que el niño pasa a través de la niñez, el mismo tipo de juegos pueden expandirse hasta incluir no solamente la casa del niño, sino que también su vecindario inmediato.

Por ejemplo, los padres pueden trazar un mapa simple del vecindario y luego, mientras dan una caminata por el vecindario real, el niño puede ser animado a detenerse periódicamente y dibujar los edificios, arboles, y otras estructuras importantes que ve. También puede pedirsele que muestre

continuará >>>>>>

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"cuan lejos hemos ido" usando un marcador rojo para trazar una linea entre cada punto inicial y cada parada.

Durante el remanente del periodo preescolar, los juegos de geografía pueden llegar a ser infinitamente mas sofisticados. Pueden prepararse mapas y utilizar la técnica del dibujo y linea (descrita mas arriba) en torno a cualquier cosa desde un corto viaje al mercado, a un largo viaje para visitar a la abuelita y el abuelo en otro estado. Y con cada repetición del episodio, pueden agregarse mayores detalles a los lugares ilustrados - posiblemente al punto de incluir los nombres de pueblos importantes, calles, puentes, etc.

Una vez que se ha viajado repetidamente por una ruta y estos mapas llegan a estar razonablemente completos, los padres pueden emplear números para identificar diversas áreas. Entonces, en vez de que el niño este constantemente preguntando, "¿Llegamos ya?" los padres y el niño pueden discutir periódicamente la pregunta, "¿Donde estamos ahora?" Y en vez de que el niño se ponga impaciente mientras espera el fin del viaje, puede ocuparse a si mismo manteniendo un récord de "¿Cuantos números mas tenemos que pasar antes de llegar a la casa de la abuelita?"

Juegos de geografía mas avanzados

El tema de la geografía puede extenderse a escala nacional y hasta internacional empleando un mapa grande del país y un globo terráqueo. En cualquier momento que una ubicación interesante es mencionada en la conversación, en la televisión, o en una película, los padres pueden usar una etiqueta engomada para mostrarle al niño exactamente donde esta. Pueden usarse diferentes etiquetas engomadas para designar lugares donde el niño ha estado y esos lugares adonde le gustaría ir. Y el niño puede ser alentado a adjuntar pequeños dibujos o pequeños juguetes a la etiqueta engomada de manera que sea capaz de recordar exactamente que fue lo que inicialmente lo motivo a aprender sobre ese lugar en particular.

Es critico recordar que estas actividades son "juegos" y no "tareas." Los padres deben estar siempre dispuestos a seguir al niño mas bien que seguir una agenda preestipulada y el niño no debería ser jamas "requerido" a hacer algo. Ademas, es importante recordar que la meta no es que el niño recite una larga lista de capitales estatales sino que obtenga una buen percepción de los elementos esenciales de la geografía mediante experiencias concretas que son directamente significativas para el o ella.

Y no se debe olvidar que estas actividades son simplemente sugerencias Para promover juegos apropiados para el desarrollo, no hay sustituto para el atinado conocimiento que los padres de un niño estén singularmente capacitados para dar, y no hay nada mas maravilloso que el notable ingenio expuesto por madres y padres que han comprometido sus talentos creativos a la tarea de traer placer a su niño.

Extendiendo las lecciones de geografía al espacio exterior

Hay un ejemplo ya legendario del padre que se las arreglo para llevar las "lecciones" de geografía de su niño preescolar mucho mas allá de las fronteras de la tierra. Cuando su hijo de cuatro años se mostró fascinado con "Star Trek" (Ruta a las Estrellas) y el espacio exterior en general, el padre decidió estructurar el sistema solar en el jardín frente a su casa. Usando una pelota de playa, un pelota de baloncesto, una de softball, una de golf, etc., recolectó nueve "planetas" de tamaño proporcional, y los coloco en una forma que aproximara su distancia relativa del "sol" (una enorme tapa de aluminio de un tarro de basura).

Su hijo de cuatro años quedo extasiado con el arreglo y continuamente hacia preguntas sobre los objetos y fenómenos representados. Por un rato, dada la naturaleza bastante estática de la exhibición, el padre tuvo dificultades para explicar ciertos conceptos, como el de " órbita". También noto que a pesar del fuerte deseo de hacerlo, su hijo tenia problemas para recordar el nombre de cada planeta a medida que la discusión se movía de un lado para otro a través del jardín.

Repentinamente, otros niños del vecindario comenzaron a venir a echarle una mirada a la extraña colección de pelotas frente a la casa. El padre le dio a cada niño una pelota y un "nombre espacial" como "Júpiter" o "Saturno" para usar en un nuevo juego. Pronto tuvo a los niños moviendo sus planetas en pequeños y grandes círculos alrededor del sol y diciendo sus nombres espaciales cada vez que se cruzaban entre si.

Cada fin de semana por los próximos meses, los niños del vecindario vinieron al jardín a jugar "el juego de los planetas." Y años después, cuando un profesor de ciencia de la escuela elemental comienzo a enseñar el sistema solar, quedo asombrado al descubrir que algunos de sus estudiantes ya conocían mas sobre el tema que el mismo.

Como ilustra claramente esta historia, la manera mas fácil y mas efectiva de educar a un niño pequeño es enseñarle lo que el o ella quieren aprender cuando quieren aprenderlo, y de asegurarse que la materia es presentada de una manera tangible y divertida. Y la manera mas precisa para medir el progreso educativo de un niño pequeño es simplemente observar cuanto se esta divirtiéndo.

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Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

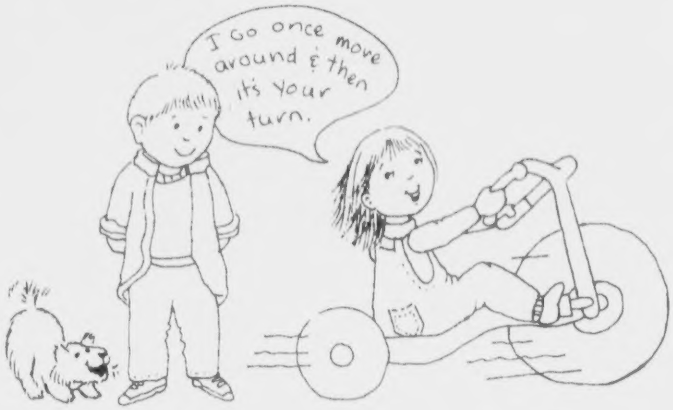
11th Year of Publication

Volume 11, Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *September 1996*

Guiding preschoolers to behave responsibly

Johnny is an active three year old. He takes all of his toys out of the brightly colored plastic bins his mother bought for sorting and doesn't put them back. He leaves his clothes wherever he happens to take them off. His exasperated mother laments that he's young and can't be expected to pick up after himself.

Johnny has a four-year-old cousin named Michael. Michael is a great help around the house. He picks up his toys before he goes to bed and he puts napkins and forks at each place at the table before dinner. He even puts his socks and underwear away in his dresser.


I go once more around & then it's your turn.

You've met children like Johnny and Michael. It's not that one is good and the other isn't. It's just that Michael is in the beginning stages of learning to be responsible while Johnny has yet to receive guidance on responsible behavior.

Having a responsible child isn't the luck of the draw

Most child developmental experts agree that it is the parent's job to teach responsibility. But what does that mean? Responsibility is instilling a set of values that will stay with your child even when you're not there. Let's face it, there's a lot to be responsible for:
Possessions: putting away toys, putting dirty clothes in a hamper or not leaving a jacket at a friend's house.
Work: helping to set the table and doing other simple household chores.
Actions: understanding that it hurts Lisa when you hit her or that it makes Jason happy when you share your tricycle.
Character: treating others with care and consideration.

Linda and Richard Eyre, authors of *Teaching Your Children Responsibility* (see Resources, page 3), believe children learn responsibility in a sequential order.

- Responsibility to parents (obedience).
- Responsibility to society for who you are and what you do (morality).
- Responsibility to self (discipline).
- The highest level is to be responsible to and for other people (service).

They also believe that children start learning responsibility before they start school.

Dr. Kevin Leman, in his book *Bringing Up Kids Without Tearing Them Down* (see Resources, page 3), says that you give children responsibility and let them learn how to handle it through trial and error. And, when they make errors, there are consequences. This way, children can learn that choices must be carefully considered because the results cannot always be readily reversed.

Teaching responsibility at different developmental stages

By understanding what a child is capable of at different stages of development, parents can provide opportunities for their children to learn responsibility. Even two year olds can understand that their behavior can help or hurt themselves and others. Children begin to understand the concept of responsibility at about 2 1/2 years old. On the simplest level, responsibility is listening to parents and caring for possessions.

In nursery school, Linda and Karen, who are both three, know that they must put away the blocks before they can go to the table for snacktime, and that puzzles go back on the shelf before they can sit on the rug for a story. They have the ability to listen to the explanation of the rules and comply with them because they understand the reasons for them. They use simple social skills such as taking turns.

In the class of four year olds, the children learn cooperation and share more readily. They

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know to wait patiently to take a turn stirring the pudding the class is making and that they each have two minutes to ride the trike before letting the next child ride it. If anyone doesn't follow the rules, it is often the children, not the teacher, who set the offending child straight.

You can spot a responsible child. He or she has a strong sense of self-esteem, a positive belief in himself, can empathize with others, has good judgment, contributes his fair share and understands the consequences of behavior.

Although a tall order, you can help create a responsible child by teaching values a day at a time through your words and by your example. Giving children responsibility and providing an opportunity for them to demonstrate responsible behavior is a delicate balance. You don't want to give them more than they can handle, yet you don't want to inhibit the progress they've made. It is important to let children prove they can handle a new task in your presence before letting them do it alone.

Assigning household chores

Begin teaching responsibility by assigning household chores to your child. Preschoolers like to help. They feel great satisfaction just from the doing. It helps them know that they are needed and appreciated.

The chores should be appropriate to your child's age and capabilities. You would not want your three year old carrying knives or glasses to the kitchen table, but he can certainly handle napkins, spoons and plastic cups. Don't worry about efficiency; it's not important if the napkin isn't folded to your liking.

Try providing child-sized tools such as a small broom or rake, a lightweight watering can, or a low stepstool to reach the sink. It is also helpful to establish a checklist. Letting your child check off a chore or placing a sticker next to a job description when it is completed gives her a sense of accomplishment. (This still works for me!)

Let your child pick jobs he or she wants to do. When possible give them a choice of chores, such as watering the flowers or setting the table. To be sure your child knows how to do the chore, do it with her several times. Emphasize that once responsibility is accepted, she is expected to follow through. It isn't something to do only when she feels like it.

There are some things for you to keep in mind:
- Don't rush in to take responsibility away because you're behind schedule.
- Ask or request rather than order or demand.
- Learn to use natural or logical consequences as a teaching tool, not as punishment. When three-year-old Angela deliberately breaks her toy drum in a fit of anger, she realizes that she can't play it anymore. She has to live with the consequences of her actions.

Cynthia Burns is a writer and editor and the mother of a daughter. Her work has appeared in THE RECORD and KIDS MAGAZINE. Both are publications in Bergen County, New Jersey.

How parents can foster responsible behavior

Developing responsibility is a gradual process. Begin by giving your child chores to do around the house.

Let your **two or three year old** choose from these household chores:

√ pick up toys and put them away
√ put books on a low shelf and magazines in a rack
√ sweep the floor
√ put napkins, plates and silverware on the table
√ put dirty clothes in a hamper
√ clear one's own place at the table
√ brush teeth, wash and dry hands and face and brush hair
√ put away folded clothes in drawers
√ help with baking or cooking under adult supervision
√ put groceries away in the pantry

Let your **four or five year old** be responsible for several of these additional chores:

√ put items in the grocery cart
√ feed pets
√ water house plants
√ help with yard and garden work
√ help make the beds
√ help do the dishes or load the dishwasher
√ dust the furniture
√ make a sandwich
√ match socks according to color
√ polish shoes

Responsibility
As Compassion

At age two, Megan can express concern for Jake when he falls down or ask why Sara is absent from a play group. By three, Megan can soothe Jake with hugs and pats. She feels sorry for Jake and feels remorse if she caused the crying.

Two and three year olds are capable of understanding that they can hurt other people's feelings. Parents can promote sharing and not hitting. Three year olds are more cooperative than two year olds. They are old enough to learn basic manners, to say please and thank you and to understand that good manners make others feel good.

By four, kids are ready to participate more actively in a project that demonstrates social responsibility and compassion. This is a good time for your child to help you bag old clothes and toys and go with you to donate these items.

Four and five year olds try to do what's right to please their parents. A five year old can respond to a question like "How would you feel if someone wouldn't play with you" with an answer such as, "It would hurt my feelings."

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Money and Responsibility

Learning the value of money and how to handle it is another area of responsibility. Beginning at age three or four, let your child buy something for 50 cents or less. Work with him so that he can learn the names of coins and bills. At this age children understand that parents give people in stores bills and coins in exchange for food and other items.

At some point you may want to add money for doing certain chores — not only to sweeten the pot, but to develop another facet of responsibility. Three year olds enjoy earning money. Try providing a clear plastic bank to store shiny pennies. Kids may not understand the value of money, but enjoy being rewarded for work. Four year olds love to earn money — pennies, nickels and dimes — for their jobs. They understand enough about money to use it to buy something they want.

Giving your child an allowance provides practice using money. The amount is determined by your finances, standards and what the money is expected to cover. Some people believe that children should be able to spend the allowance any way they see fit. This allows them to enjoy what they bought or to learn from purchasing mistakes.

Responsibility At School

Patti Greenberg Wollman, a preschool teacher and an author, says responsibility is an internal mechanism. At a young age, responsibility for social behavior begins with the ability to control impulses. In preschool social skills are emphasized and children are reminded not to hit and not to hurt. In her classroom, she promotes the concept of good citizenship and responsible, positive behavior.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Books for Adults

Teaching Your Children Responsibility, by Linda and Richard Eyre, Simon and Schuster, 1984. The Eyres identify twelve simple kinds of responsibility including things, actions and choices that children can relate to. They provide simple, practical games and activities that you can use to teach your children these concepts.

Bringing Up Kids Without Tearing Them Down, by Dr. Kevin Leman, Focus on the Family Publishing, 1995. This author and family counselor offers steps for raising strong, secure children. The book includes some of the most commonly asked questions about children, with workable solutions.

Successful Parenting, by Barbara Lynn Taylor. Richards & Taylor Video Productions (PO Box 11851, Winston-Salem NC 27116, 800 544 2219), 1994. These materials, including videos, workbooks, and audiocassettes, focus on the topics: *Self-Esteem Is the Key, Communication is Crucial,* and *Discipline Makes the Difference.* They use clear and coherent language and include specific strategies parents can use. One section is an explanation of how logical consequences can help to make children more responsible.

Behind the Playdough Curtain: A Year in My Life as a Preschool Teacher, by Patti Greenberg Wollman, Scribner, 1994. A year of preschool was documented so that "outsiders" can better understand what goes on inside the early childhood classroom. It takes the reader through the ups and downs of the critical first year of school for thirteen three-and-four-year-old children.

Books for Children

No Jumping on the Bed! by Tedd Arnold. Puffin Pied Piper, 1996. Walter ignores his father's warning to stop jumping on the bed in this imaginative look at the consequences of unacceptable behavior. As a result, his bed crashes through the floor to the downstairs neighbor's apartment! Down and down he goes, carrying the neighbors with him to each floor below. Is it all a dream? No matter. Walter decides, "No more jumping on the bed for me." But what about his brother Delbert? Watch out below!

The Little Red Hen, by Byron Barton. HarperCollins, 1993. With bright, childlike illustrations, the author/illustrator retells the classic story of the hen who asks her friends for help with planting, threshing, and grinding the wheat. "Not I," says each of them. When it is time to eat the bread she has baked, the other animals find out that their behavior has kept them from the delicious reward.

Shortcut, by Donald Crews. Greenwillow, 1992. A group of children are taking a short-cut home by walking along a railroad track. "We should have taken the road. But it was late, and it was getting dark, so we started down the track." The author/illustrator helps you feel the danger in the air as they jump off the track when the train rushes past them. And you know they mean it when they say, "We walked home without a word.... And we didn't take the short-cut again."

Hunky Dory Ate It, by Katie Evans. Puffin Unicorn, 1996. In this book with simple rhyming text, the mischievous puppy, Hunky Dory, eats everything in sight. As a result, he gets very sick, and must go to the vet for help.

I Meant to Clean My Room Today, by Miriam Nerlove. McElderry, 1988. This story introduces us to a little girl who thinks of the most imaginative reasons why she could not clean her room that day. She was interrupted by a white lion, a green kitten, a pink monkey, and so on — a wonderful variety of creatures of many colors that got in the way of her good intentions.

The Big Storm, by Rhea Tregebov. Hyperion, 1993. Everybody in Jeanette's family has a job in the delicatessen that the family owns. Jeanette sweeps the floor, her brothers help with deliveries and even the cat takes responsibility for keeping the mice away. One stormy night, Jeanette forgets about her faithful cat waiting out in the snow for her. But Jeanette cares about her pet, and the cat is saved by the loving treatment she receives.

The Biggest Bear, by Lynd Ward. Houghton Mifflin, 1952. This classic story tells of a little boy's pet bear, who grows so large and unmanageable that the boy, Johnny, is told by his father that he must bring his pet back into the woods. But the the bear keeps coming back home, and Johnny's father decides that the bear must be shot. A Caldecott Medal winner, this book is full of suspense, with a surprising happy ending.

Follow Me! by Harriet Ziefert. Puffin Easy-To-Read Level 1, 1996. Lee listens carefully to his mother when she takes him shopping. "Follow me!" she says, and gets into the elevator. The doors close before Lee can get on. But the child remembers what his mother had told him she was going to buy, and finally finds his mother.

Bibliography by
Cynthia A. Burns & Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Have you ever visited an apple orchard? Thick with blossoms and bumble bees in the spring; heavy with apples in the autumn. What other food could be so perfect for a preschool snack? Sweet, crunchy, juicy, a keep-the-doctor-away food.

It is well worth taking your preschooler to an orchard, or going along with a preschool class on a field trip. Here apples are harvested and sorted, packaged and shipped, and might be ground into juice or brewed into cider, candied, frozen or dried, baked into breads or strudel.

My daughter's class visited a most amazing orchard in Nebraska City, Nebraska, called Morton Orchard at Arbor Day Farm, which is owned by the National Arbor Day Foundation, a "non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting tree planting and conservation throughout the United States."

We visited the Orchard/ Apple House, and learned about the many varieties of apples grown in the section called Preservation Orchard. One of the apples grown there was as big as a grapefruit, and one was as small as a plum. Parents enjoyed this trip just as much as the children.Whether you go with a preschool or as a family, there might be an orchard of which you were not previously aware, close enough to take a day trip.

Lee Jackson's book, *Apples, Apples, Everywhere*, profiles apple orchards nationwide. Lovely sketches of the orchards are interspersed with their stories and the book includes over 150 ways to "fix" apples. I highly recommend this new book, published in 1996, to apple lovers and travelers.

Would you like to visit Emma Krumbee's Restaurant, Apple Orchard, Bakery, Deli, & Country Store in Belle Plaine, Minnesota? Or plan a family vacation which includes seeing El Vista ("the view") Orchards, Inc. in Fairfield, Pennsylvania, one that boasts over 700 acres. Lyman Orchards, Middlefield, Connecticut, "have resided within one family's stewardship for over 250 years. With the initial purchase of 36 acres in 1741."

When preschool starts, so does the time of year for serious apple eaters and apple givers. That might be why the apple is a symbol for teachers. What a simple, yet perfect gift for a teacher, something of the earth, healthy, non-fattening, in beautiful hues of red or gold. And if you are asked by your preschool teacher for suggestions of where to go on a field trip, why not suggest a trip to an apple orchard!

Here are three apple recipes from *Apples, Apples, Everywhere** to try with your preschooler:

A.B.C. MUFFINS

(Apple - Buckwheat - Cinnamon)

1 cup unbleached white flour
1 cup buckwheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/2 cup honey
1 egg
1 cup cider (or milk)
1 cup finely chopped apple

Mix together dry ingredients. Add honey, egg, and cider or milk. Mix only until dry ingredients are moistened. Gently fold in apples. Spoon into well-greased muffin pans. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 15-23 minutes. Makes one dozen muffins. *(Leona Heitsch, The Ridge Orchards, Bourbon, Missouri)*

DOUBLE APPLE SALAD

1 cup boiling water
3 oz. package orange gelatin
1 cup apple cider
1 cup chopped apple
1/4 cup diced celery
1/4 cup chopped walnuts
Dash of salt (to 1/2 teaspoon)

Pour boiling water over orange gelatin and salt; stir to dissolve. Add cider; chill until partially set. Stir in chopped apple, celery and walnuts. Spoon into 3-cup ring mold. Chill until set. *(Gayle Irons, Irons' Fruit Farm, Lebanon, Ohio)*

APPLE CRANBERRY CRISP

3 cups sliced apples
8 oz. can jellied cranberry sauce
1/2 teaspoon grated orange rind
1 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
pinch salt
1/3 cup butter

Mix apples, cranberry sauce, and orange rind in greased 8x8 inch pan. Combine remaining ingredients in bowl of food processor and turn on and off until crumbly. Pour crumb topping over apple mixture. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 45 minutes or until browned. *(Ann Steele, Independence, Missouri)*

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*For information about ordering *Apples, Apples, Everywhere* – contact Images Unlimited Publishing at 800/356-9315.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)

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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$30.00
two year..........55.00
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de septiembre, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 7) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Guiando a los preescolares a comportarse responsablemente

Juan es un activo niño de tres años. El saca todos sus juguetes de las brillantemente coloreadas cajas plásticas que su madre le compro para clasificarlos y no los pone de vuelta. Deja su ropa adonde quiera que sea que se las saca. Su exasperada madre se lamenta que el es muy joven y que no puede esperarse que recoja sus cosas por si mismo.

Juan tiene un primo de cuatro años llamado Miguel. Miguel es una gran ayuda alrededor de la casa. Recoge sus juguetes antes de irse a la cama y pone las servilletas y los tenedores en cada lugar en la mesa antes de la cena. Hasta pone sus calcetines y ropa interior en su gaveta.

Usted ha conocido niños — y niñas — como Juan y Miguel. No es que uno sea bueno y el otro no. Es simplemente que Miguel esta en las primeras etapas de aprender a ser responsable mientras que Juan aun no recibido orientación sobre comportamiento responsable.

Tener un niño responsable no es cosa de suerte

La mayor parte de los expertos en desarrollo del niño están de acuerdo en que es tarea de los padres enseñar responsabilida? Pero que significa esto? La esponsabilidad es instigar un onjunto de valores que ermanecerán con su niño asta cuando usted no este resente. Hay que admitirlo, ay mucho de que ser esponsable:
osesiones: guardar los uguetes, poner la ropa sucia en a canasta o no dejar una haqueta en la casa de un migo. *Trabajo:* ayudar a poner a mesa y otras tareas ogareñas simples.
Acciones: Comprender que a Lisa le duele cuando usted la golpea o que a Javier lo hace feliz cuando usted comparte su triciclo con él.
Carácter: tratar a otros con cuidado y consideración.

Linda y Richard Eyre, autores de *Teaching Your Children Responsibility* (Enseñando responsabilidad a los niños) [vea Recursos], creen que los niños aprenden responsabilidad en un orden secuencial.

- Responsabilidad ante los padres (obediencia).
- Responsabilidad ante la sociedad por quien se es y lo que se hace (moralidad).
- Responsabilidad ante uno mismo (disciplina).
- El nivel mas alto es ser responsable ante y para otra gente (servicio).

Ellos también creen que los niños empiezan a aprender responsabilidad antes de comenzar la escuela.

El doctor Kevin Leman, en su libro *Bringing Up Kids Without TearingThem Down* (Criando niños sin romperlos) [vea Recursos], dice que los padres le dan responsabilidades a los niños y los dejan aprender como manejarlas a través de intentos y errores. Y cuando cometen errores esto trae consecuencias. De esta manera, los niños pueden aprender que deben considerarse cuidadosamente sus decisiones porque los resultados no siempre pueden ser revertidos fácilmente.

Enseñando responsabilidad en diferentes etapas del desarrollo

Al comprender lo queun niño es capaz dehacer en las diferentes etapas de su desarrollo, los padres pueden proveerle oportunidades a sus niños para aprender responsabilidad. Hasta los niños de dos año pueden comprender que su comportamiento puede ayudar o dañar tanto a si mismo como a otros. Los niños comienzan a comprender el concepto de la responsabilidad alrededor de los 2 años y medio. En el nivel mas simple, la responsabilidad es escuchar a los padres y cuidar sus pertenencias.

En la escuela de párvulos, Linda y Ana, ambos de tres años, saben que deben guardar los bloques antes de poder ir a la mesa a comer, y que los rompecabezas deben ser puestos de vuelta en el estante antes que puedan sentarse en la alfombra a escuchar un cuento. Ambas tienen la capacidad para escuchar la explicación de las reglas y cumplirlas porque comprenden las razones para ellas. Las niñas usan habilidades sociales simples tal como tomar turnos.

En la clase de los de cuatro años, los niños aprenden cooperación y comparten mas fácilmente. Ellos saben esperar pacientemente su turno para batir el budín que la clase esta haciendo y que cada uno de ellos tiene dos minutos para andar en el triciclo antes de dejar que el próximo niño lo use. Si alguien no sigue las reglas, son frecuentemente los niños, no el profesor, los que ponen al niño díscolo en su lugar.

Se puede reconocer al niño responsable. El o ella tienen un fuerte sentido de auto estima, una actitud positiva sobre si mismo, puede avenirse con otros, distingue entre lo bueno y lo malo, tiene buen juicio, contribuye su justa cuota y comprende las consecuencias de su comportamiento.

Aunque es una difícil tarea, usted puede ayuda a criar un niño responsable enseñandole valores un día a la vez mediante sus palabras y su ejemplo. Darle responsabilidad a los niños y proveerles de una oportunidad para demostrar comportamientos responsables es un balance delicado. No querrá darles más de lo que pueden aprender, y tampoco querrá inhibir el progreso que han hecho. Es importante dejar que los niños prueben que pueden llevar a cabo una nueva tarea en su presencia antes de dejarlos que la hagan por si solos.

Asignando tareas hogareñas

Empiece a enseñarle responsabilidad asignandole tareas hogareñas a su niño. A los preescolares les gusta ayudar. Sienten gran satisfacción solo de hacer algo. Les ayuda saber que son necesitados y apreciados. Las tareas deberían ser apropiadas a la edad del niño y sus capacidades. No querrá que su niño o niña de tres años acarree vasos o cuchillos a la mesa de la cocina, pero seguro que puede acarrear servilletas, cucharas y tazas plásticas. No se preocupe de la eficiencia, no es importante si la servilleta no es doblada de acuerdo a su gusto.

Intente proveerle herramientas adecuadas para un niño como un rastrillo o una escoba pequeña, un regadera liviana, o un taburete bajo para alcanzar el fregadero. Es también útil establecer una lista de tareas. Dejar que su niño o niña ponga una etiqueta engomada al lado de una descripción de una tarea después de haberla completado le da un sentido de realización.

Deje que su niño escoja los trabajos que el o ella quiere hacer. Cuando sea posible déjelo que escoja entre varias la tarea que quiere realizar, tal como regar las flores o poner la mesa. Para asegurarse que su niño sabe como hacer el trabajo, hágalo con él o ella varias veces. Enfatize que una vez que acepta una responsabilidad, se espera que la lleve a cabo. No es algo para hacer solo cuando tiene ganas de hacerlo.

Hay algunas cosas que debe mantener en mente:

- No se precipite en quitarle la responsabilidad porque usted esta atrasada.
- Pida o solicite mas bien que ordenar o exigir.

continuará>>>>

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- Aprenda a usar consecuencias lógicas o naturales como herramienta pedagógica, no como castigo. Cuando Angela, que tiene tres años, rompe deliberadamente su tambor de juguete durante un ataque de rabia, ella se da cuenta que no podrá jugar con el nunca mas. Tiene que vivir con las consecuencias de sus acciones.

Cynthia Burns es una escritora y editora y madre de una hija. Su trabajo ha aparecido en ***The Record* y *Kids Magazine*.** Ambos son publicadas en el Condado de Bergen, Nueva Jersey

Como los padres pueden fomentar el comportamiento responsable

Desarrollar responsabilidad es un proceso gradual. Comience dándole a su niño tareas para hacer alrededor de la casa.

Tareas hogareñas para considerar: Deje que su niño de **dos o tres años** escoja entre estas responsabilidades:
√ recoger juguetes y guardarlos
√ poner libros y revistas en un estante bajo o revistero
√ barrer el piso
√ poner servilletas, platos y cubiertos en la mesa
√ poner la ropa sucia en el canasto para la ropa sucia
√ levantar su propio lugar en la mesa
√ cepillarse los dientes, lavarse y secarse la cara y las manos y cepillarse el pelo
√ poner la ropa doblada en sus cajones
√ ayudar a cocinar o hornear bajo supervisión de un adulto
√ poner los comestibles en la despensa

Deje que su niño de **cuatro o cinco años** sea responsable de varias de estas tareas adicionales:
√ poner artículos en el carrito del supermercado
√ lustrar los zapatos
√ alimentar a los animales regalones
√ regar las plantas de la casa
√ ayudar con el trabajo en el jardín o el patio
√ ayudar a hacer las camas
√ ayudar a lavar los platos o cargar el lavaplatos
√ desempolvar los muebles
√ hacer un sandwich
√ emparejar los calcetines según su color

La responsabilidad como compasión

A los dos años Celina puede expresar preocupación por Jaime cuando este se cae o cuando pregunta por que Sara está ausente de un grupo de juego. A los tres, Celina puede apaciguar a Jaime con abrazos y palmaditas. Ella siente pena por Jaime y siente remordimiento si ella causo el llanto.

Los niños de dos y tres años son capaces de comprender que pueden herir los sentimientos de las personas. Los padres pueden promover el compartir y no golpearse. Los niños de tres años son mas cooperadores que los de dos años. Son suficientemente maduros como para aprender modales básicos, a decir por favor y agradecer y comprender que los buenos modales hacen que otros se sientan bien.

Cuando cumple cuatro, los niños están listos para participar mas activamente en un proyecto que demuestre compasión y responsabilidad social. Este es un buen momento para que su niño la ayude a poner en bolsas los juguetes y las ropas viejas e ir con usted a donar estos artículos.

Los niños de cuatro y cinco años tratan de hacer lo que es correcto para agradar a sus padres. Un niño de cinco años puede responder a una pregunta como, "¿Como te sentirías si alguien no quisiera jugar contigo?" con una respuesta como, "Me lastimaría mis sentimientos."

Dinero y responsabilidad

Aprender el valor del dinero y como manejarlo es otra área de responsabilidad. Empezando a los tres o cuatro años, deje que su niño compre algo por unos 50 centavos o menos. Trabaje con el de modo que aprenda el nombre de las monedas y los billetes. A esta edad los niños comprenden que los padres le dan monedas y billetes a las personas en los almacenes para llevar alimentos y otros artículos a la casa.

En algún momento usted podría querer darle algún dinero por hacer ciertas tareas — no solamente para endulzar la empresa, sino que para desarrollar otra faceta de la responsabilidad. Los niños de tres años gozan ganando dinero. Trate de proveerle una caja de ahorro de plástico transparente para que guarde los peniques mas nuevos. Los niños pueden no comprender el valor del dinero, pero disfrutan siendo premiados por su trabajo. A los niños de cuatro años les encanta ganar dinero — peniques, niqueles y monedas de diez centavos — por sus trabajos. Ellos comprenden lo suficiente sobre el dinero como para usarlo para comprar algo que quieren. Darle a su niño una mesada provee practica en el uso del dinero. La cantidad es determinada por sus finanzas, normas y lo que se espera que el dinero debe cubrir. Algunas personas creen que los niños deben gastar su mesada de cualquier manera que ellos quieran. Esto les permite disfrutar lo que compran y aprender de sus equivocaciones adquisitivas.

La responsabilidad en la escuela

Patti Greenberg Wollman, un profesora preescolar y escritora, dice que la responsabilidad es un mecanismo interno. A una edad joven, la responsabilidad del comportamiento social comienza con la capacidad de controlar los impulsos. En la escuela parvularia se enfatizan las habilidades sociales y a los niños se les recuerda que no deben golpear y no lastimar. En su aula, Greenberg Wollman promueve el buen comportamiento ciudadano y el comportamiento positivo y responsable.

Translated by
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

11th Year of Publication

Volume 11, Number 8 | An International Resource for Professionals and Parents | October 1996

There's a concept behind that apple

Did you ever think about how you know that an apple is an apple? Or what the color red looks like? Or what happens at a birthday party? Or what it means to be "honest"? Fruits, colors, actions, values, all these and more are forms of *concepts*. Some concepts are fairly easy to describe in words; others are nearly impossible. Yet children learn them, as a natural part of their life. They learn because human beings are designed to do just that, extract meaning and information from the surrounding world. But our children also learn because parents and teachers provide experiences, the raw material for their learning.

Learning is as natural as breathing

Babies and children find learning as natural as breathing. They are inquisitive and curious, always looking, exploring, and trying to understand the world around them.

It starts with babies seeking stimulation. They stare long and hard at us, learning what we look like. Babies don't just glance at things, they study them intently until they have extracted whatever meaning they can.

They delight in pushing and pulling and swiping at things, learning causal connections. They begin to understand cause and effect. Baby swipes at a mobile, and her actions cause the colorful bears to move. She is delighted with this and does it again and again. It's as if she is thinking "When I swipe at that mobile, all the colorful bears twist and bob around. Neat!"

They learn how to make balls roll on the floor and that round things roll but square things don't.

Objects as thinker toys

Youngsters "think" with things. They experience and experiment not with ideas but with concrete objects from the world around them. They explore to see what each can do and then take those new ideas and try them out on something else. So a cardboard cylinder (from a paper towel roll) can be more interesting than a toy which "plays by itself." The child can watch the toy, but after a while he has simply learned all he can. The cylinder, on the other hand, allows him to try out his new actions. John has learned to play peek-a-boo with his hands, but he can also play peek-a-boo with the cylinder. He rolls his ball, but now sees he can roll his cylinder too.

John can also learn new actions from playing with the cylinder. He discovers how odd things look when he peers through the tube and sees just a little piece of things, like a bit of the couch or his father's nose when he climbs up on his lap. He also learns how funny his voice sounds when he talks into the tube.

Once John has discovered this, he can apply that new idea to other objects. Will his voice sound funny talking into his juice cup? Will it work if he talks into his hand?

Kids need a variety of things to play with and explore in order to develop these new concepts,

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ideas, and actions. How would children learn about "sticky" if they didn't have stickers or glue — or learn about stacking and balance if they didn't have blocks? We need to make sure they have a variety of things to explore and the benefit of our time and interest to help them discover some of the neat things they can do.

Parents also teach through language

Although time spent with our children helping them play with toys is crucial, we do much more than give our children interesting toys and help them play. We directly teach them through language. As children develop language they become able, with our help, to grab each piece of experience and label it. They become verbal; their concepts become more abstract and they gradually develop the ability to use language to learn. This starts gradually and takes years to develop, but at some point they will no longer be dependent on what they can touch and feel to explore. At some point, they will be able to learn things from words alone. And we are crucial to that effort.

Almost from birth we provide a steady stream of conversation about what we are doing. We talk as we change their diapers or give them breakfast. "Now, I'm going to put this nice clean diaper on you," or "Here's some delicious cereal — ready?" We point out things like stop signs and delivery trucks as we go for walks. We play games like "Where's Your Nose?" When we read to them we point out the objects in the book and identify them.

Language also helps concepts and objects become more differentiated and abstract. For example, at first almost everything with wheels is a car. "Look at the big car," says Alison as she looks out the window. "No," says her mother, "that's a truck. The Ellisons are moving and the truck is going to take their furniture to their new home. See how many wheels it has? Cars can't carry a lot of furniture and they don't have as many wheels." And Alison learns how cars differ from trucks and what trucks do that is unique.

This happens over and again. All dogs start out being "dogs," but end up — as children learn to refine the different categories — as cocker spaniels and sheepdogs, or frisky puppies. In fact, for many kids, cats also start out by being dogs. But parents explain "dogs bark while cats purr or say meow."

Concepts which are difficult to describe and explain are acquired through the give-and-take of our conversations. Just consider how you would stumble describing the concept of color, for example, or how one knows that something is made of plastic. But in conversation we begin to lay the groundwork for the development of these more abstract ideas. Red acquires meaning through its association with the red car but not the blue car, the red ball not the yellow ball. When we are preparing to go to the beach or lake we may say "Let's bring the plastic car to take into the water. The metal one will rust."

As they get older we supply our children with even more information as part of our conversations. We give them facts and details. "Isn't that a beautiful tree? It's a maple tree. Do you know we get maple syrup from trees? Do you remember the syrup we poured on the pancakes this morning? That came from maple trees."

Scripts

Children also develop generalized expectations of the events and experiences in their lives. These are often called scripts because they indicate what everyone is "supposed" to do. For very young children there are scripts: for bedtime activities (and just try to change that script and see what happens), for getting ready in the morning, and even game scripts like how we play peek-a-boo. Scripts help children make predictions about their world and the actions of the people within it. They are based on the sameness and consistency of experiences. Without them, children would be unable to predict what would happen next. We tend to take scripts for granted, but imagine being at a ceremony which you have never attended before. Even as adults our first thoughts are often "What's going to happen?" "What should I do?"

We can see our children's scripts in action by watching their dramatic play. How do they play house? What happens when they play supermarket? One common script is a child's birthday party. If we asked a youngster "What happens when you go to a birthday party?" we might hear... "You get all dressed up. Everyone brings a gift. We play games, eat cake and candy and watch the birthday child open his gifts."

Scripts are very useful. It means that when Sara goes to a birthday party she knows what to expect. It may be very different from what her mother expects from an adult birthday party. So different in fact that Sara may easily be confused when attending the adult version. "Where are the games?" she might think to herself. "This isn't party food."

Helping kids learn concepts

Children learn best through first-hand experiences. They are not sophisticated enough to use language as a substitute for experience. Language can only reflect and expand children's experiences, not replace them. Adults can understand a story from a book. We can learn about gardening from the newspaper and apply that information to our vegetables or flowering plants. We can read a magazine article about why we should recycle plastic and decide that recycling makes sense. Young children cannot. They need to develop the concepts through experiences, then acquire the "word label" from us.

- Talk with your child when reading or watching television. When looking at a picture book ask your youngster open-ended questions to discover what she already knows and supply additional information. Your child may not be able to watch cloth being made, but if he sees a program about it on television, or reads about it in a book, you have the opportunity to ask questions and provide information. You can take a piece of cloth and examine it together seeing how it is woven...and how it can become unwoven.

- Teach your child concepts with actual materials. It means nothing to a youngster to hear that blue and yellow make green. Even if he can patiently repeat it back to you. But, if you mix blue paint and yellow paint and create green, that means quite a lot.

- Talk to your children about what you are doing and why. Don't take it for granted that your children know what you are doing when you are baking, pruning bushes, putting out seeds for the birds, or working on the car. Whatever you are doing, it is an opportunity to explain and teach.

- Provide a variety of experiences and materials. Collect shells along the beach; watch how plants grow in a garden; supply colored paper, paints, and glitter; find child-sized musical instruments. Encourage family sing-a-longs and participation in preparing family picnics. All these things and more are the raw materials our children use to develop concepts, try out new ideas, and learn about the world around them.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. is a research psychologist amd writer. Her articles have appeared in publications nationwide. She will be the editor of *Parent and preschooler Newsletter* as of January 1, 1997.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Before the School Bell Rings, by Carol B. Hillman. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1995. This paperback discusses child's play, learning environments, outdoor exploration, and other important topics in early childhood to help caregivers fill young children's lives with healthy and joyful experiences.

Learning Through Cooking Activities, by Amy Houts. Preschool Publications (1-800-726-1708), 1993. Amy Houts shows how cooking is not only fun for young children — but a way of learning many different concepts.

Resources for Early Childhood: A Handbook, edited by Hannah Nuba et al. Garland, 1994. This important resource book includes essays and annotated bibliographies by respected experts on all aspects of child development and early childhood education.

For Children

Short Train, Long Train, by Frank Asch. Scholastic Cartwheel, 1992. Designed with humor and simplicity, this book illustrates exactly what *long* and *short* mean, as youngsters turn each page to see, for example, a short car and then unfold the page to see a long car, then a short dog and a long dog, and so on, giggling as they read.

It Begins with an A, by Stephanie Calmenson. Hyperion, 1994. Preschoolers will enjoy the riddles in this alphabet guessing game in rhyme, with cheerful illustrations by Marisabina Russo.

Where's the Fly? by Caron Lee Cohen. Greenwillow, 1996. The illustrations in this intriguing book show increasingly distant perspectives, from a fly on a dog's nose to the earth itself — introducing young children to the concept of spatial relations.

Ten Black Dots, by Donald Crews. Mulberry Books edition, 1994. In a highly creative counting book, the reader can count black dots from 1 to 10, while learning how those same dots can be used to make a variety of things — from the eyes of a fox to the knobs on a radio.

The Shape of Things, by Dayle Ann Dodds. Candlewick Press, 1994. With simple rhymes and colorful illustrations, this book can help children identify shapes in the world around them.

Now Soon Later, by Lisa Grunwald. Greenwillow, 1996. The concept of *time* can be difficult for young children to understand. This book takes a little girl through the day's activities, describing in terms preschoolers can understand, what is happening *Now,* what will happen *Soon,* and what will happen *Later.*

Who Am I? text by Sherrilyn A. Henning, photographs by Steven Walker. Puffin Books, 1996. Close up, animals don't always look like themselves. Preschoolers will love playing the game on every page of this book, guessing which animal is on the page in a closeup, and lifting the flap to see the animal's face.

Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral? by Tana Hoban. Greenwillow, 1995. The photographs of this famous photographer/author will arouse children's curiosity as they guess which category fits each picture.

Moving Day, by Robert Kalan. Greenwillow, 1996. A hermit crab uses the empty shells of shellfish for its home. This particular hermit crab must move out of a shell that has become too tight. As he looks for a new home, he finds shells that are too small, too big, too long, too wide, etc., until he finds one that is just right.

Left or Right? by Karl Rehm and Kay Koike. Clarion, 1991. "The concept of left or right can be tricky for young children to master." By using much repetition, and clear color photographs, the authors help to clarify this difficult concept.

Shoes Shoes Shoes, by Ann Morris. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1995. Colorful photographs illustrate this book showing a rich assortment of shoes with many different uses, from all over the world.

***Color:** a poem* by Christina Rossetti. HarperTrophy 1994. With beautiful paintings by Mary Teichman, this book uses the delightful poem by Rossetti, first published in 1871, to introduce children to colors and to poetry.

Wheels Around, by Shelley Rotner. Houghton Mifflin, 1995. There are wheels that help us to work, and others that help us to play. With simple text and vivid photographs, the author/photographer shows the readers the many ways that wheels are used.

Heads & Tails, by Steven Walker. Puffin Books, 1996. When you turn the pages of this intriguing book, you find color photographs of animal tails. When you lift the flap on each page, you can discover for yourself what the animal's head looks like.

Do Pigs Have Stripes? by Melanie Walsh. Houghton Mifflin, 1996. With bright child-like illustrations and simple text, the author/illustrator asks questions that make young children want to think about the answers. Then they can turn the page and find out!

Bibliography
by Betty Farber

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Of Pumpkins and Pie Crusts

When my daughter, Emily, was a preschooler, she didn't like many of her vegetables or fruits. And she shied away from fruit pies with a firm, "No, thank you." But there was something about pumpkin pie that made her try a bite and eat a whole piece. Maybe it was the texture: the smooth, spicy sweetness and the whipped cream topping. She loved it! Go figure. Preschoolers will always keep me guessing, because I never would have believed that pumpkin would have been the one pie Emily would eat.

With the changing of the seasons, autumn brings many images: brightly colored leaves, harvested crops, hooded jackets, and school buses. Have you seen the signs of autumn this year? Have you pointed out the pumpkins to your preschooler, promising to buy one to carve a jack-o-lantern? Pumpkins are a once-a- year purchase, usually at Halloween or Thanksgiving. What would autumn be without pumpkins?

Once a year seems to be just enough. Who else, besides pumpkin growers, would want to eat pumpkin pie in the spring or summer? Yet what else would you dream of eating when the chill in the air makes you mindful of what lies ahead. The scent of cinnamon, cloves, ginger, the essence of pumpkin pie spice, fills the warmth of the kitchen, and you know you will be well fed.

People have tried modernizing pumpkin. They have made pumpkin ice cream and pumpkin cheesecake, pumpkin cookies and pumpkin muffins, but the best way to serve pumpkin is baked in a pie. And pumpkin pie is relatively easy to make, even with preschoolers. After the pie crust is ready, all ingredients are mixed together in one bowl, poured into the crust and baked.

What makes up the filling of a pumpkin pie? *The First American Cookbook, A Facsimile of "American Cookery," 1796* simply states: "Pompkin No. 2: One quart of milk, 1 pint pompkin, 4 eggs, molaffes (molasses), allfpice (allspice) and ginger in a cruft (crust), bake 1 hour."

Following are three recipes for pumpkin pie. You can choose between the traditional filling, which is rich with cream, the low fat variety, which uses skimmed milk, or pumpkin pie with a twist, a pecan-topped pie. Be sure to refrigerate your pie after it cools. Pumpkin pie is made with eggs, so it could spoil if left unrefrigerated.

TRADITIONAL PUMPKIN PIE

1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
2 cups (1-lb. can) pumpkin
1 2/3 cups light cream
3/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon cloves
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon salt

Have pie crust ready. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Ask preschoolers help measure and mix ingredients together in a large bowl. Pour into pie shell. Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees and continue baking for 45 minutes or until set. Cool, serve each piece with a dollop of whipped cream.

90s PUMPKIN PIE

1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
2 cups (1-lb. can) pumpkin
1 1/2 cups evaporated skim milk
2/3 cup sugar
3 egg whites or 2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/8 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon grated orange rind

Have pie crust ready. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Ask preschoolers help measure and mix ingredients together in a large bowl. Pour into pie shell. Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees and continue baking for 45 minutes or until set. Cool, serve with low-fat whipped topping, if desired.

PECAN PUMPKIN PIE

1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
2 cups (1-lb. can) pumpkin
1 cup light cream
1 cup milk
1/2 brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
2 eggs
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon cloves
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1 tablespoon flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup toasted pecans

Have pie crust ready. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Ask preschoolers help measure and mix all ingredients except pecans together in a large bowl. Pour into pie shell; sprinkle with pecans. Bake for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 325 degrees and continue baking for 50 minutes or until set. Cool. Serve with whipped cream.

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)

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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**

**English Language Edition**
one year...US$30.00
two year..........55.00
three year........78.00

**English/Spanish Language Edition**
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Pp
Parent
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de octubre, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 8) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Hay un concepto detrás de esa manzana

¿Ha pensado alguna vez usted sobre como sabe que una manzana es una manzana? ¿O como es el color rojo? ¿O que sucede en una fiesta de cumpleaños? ¿O que significa ser "honrado"? Las frutas, los colores, las acciones, los valores, todo esto y mas son clases de conceptos. Algunos conceptos son bastante fáciles de describir en palabras, mientras que otros son prácticamente imposibles de explicar. Sin embargo, los niños los aprenden como una parte natural de sus vidas. Ellos aprenden porque los seres humanos están diseñados a hacer precisamente eso: extraer información y significado del mundo circundante. Pero nuestros niños también aprenden porque los padres y los profesores les proveen de experiencias, el material básico para su aprendizaje.

Aprender es tan natural como respirar

Los bebes y los niños ncuentran el aprender tan natural como respirar. Son nquisitivos y curiosos, siempre mirando, explorando, y tratando de comprender el mundo alrededor de ellos.

El aprendizaje comienza con los bebes buscando estimulaciones. Nos miran por largo rato y fijamente, aprendiendo como nos vemos. Los bebes no solo miran las cosas, las estudian intensamente hasta que han extraído de ellas todo el significado que pueden.

Gozan empujando y tirando y manoteando las cosas, aprendiendo conexiones casuales y causales. Empiezan a comprender lo que es causa y efecto. El bebe manotea un móvil, y su acción hace que los osos de colores se muevan. El niño se entusiasma con esto y lo hace una y otra vez. Es como si pensara, "Cuando manoteo ese móvil, todos los osos de color se retuercen y saltan alrededor. ¡Fantástico!"

Ellos aprenden a como hacer que las pelotas rueden sobre el piso y que las cosas redondas ruedan y que las cuadradas no.

Objetos como juguetes para pensar

Los niños "piensan" con cosas. Ellos experimentan y tienen experiencias no con ideas sino que con objetos concretos del mundo que los rodea. Ellos exploran para ver lo que cada uno puede hacer y luego toman esas nuevas ideas y las ponen en practica con otras cosas. Por lo que un tubo de cartulina (de un rollo de toallas de papel) puede ser mas interesante que un juguete que "juega por si mismo." El niño puede mirar el juguete, pero después de un rato el o ella simplemente ha aprendido todo lo que pueden de el. El tubo, por otra parte, le permite intentar sus nuevas acciones. Juan ha aprendido a jugar a espiar con sus manos, pero el puede también jugar a espiar con el tubo. Hace rodar su pelota, pero ahora ve que también puede hacer rodar su tubo.

Juan también puede aprender nuevas acciones – jugando con el tubo. Descubre cuan extrañas se ven las cosas cuando el escudriña a través del tubo y ve solo una pequeña parte de las cosas; un pedazo del sofá o la nariz de su padre cuando se sube sobre su regazo. También aprende cuan cómica suena su voz cuando habla en el tubo.

Una vez que Juan ha descubierto esto, puede aplicar esa nueva idea a otros objetos. Sonara cómica su voz hablando en su vaso para jugo? Funciona igual si habla en su mano?

Los niños necesitan una variedad de cosas para jugar y explorar a fin de desarrollar estos nuevos conceptos, ideas, y actividades. ¿Como podrían aprender los niños sobre el concepto "pegajoso" si no tuvieran etiquetas engomadas o goma para pegar? ¿O aprender sobre amontonar cosas y sobre el equilibrio si no tuvieran bloques? Necesitamos asegurarnos que ellos tengan una variedad de cosas para explorar y el beneficio de nuestro tiempo e interés para ayudarlos a descubrir algunas de las cautivantes cosas que pueden hacer.

Los padres también ensenan a través del lenguaje

Aunque el tiempo gastado con nuestros niños ayudandolos a jugar con sus juguetes es crucial, hacemos mucho mas que darles juguetes interesantes y ayudarlos a jugar. A través del lenguaje les ensenamos directamente. A medida que los niños desarrollan el lenguaje ellos llegan a ser capaces, con nuestra ayuda, de asimilar cada experiencia y etiquetarla. Se transforman en seres verbales: sus conceptos se ponen mas abstractos y gradualmente desarrollan la capacidad de usar lenguaje para aprender. Esto comienza gradualmente y necesita anos para desarrollarse, pero en algún punto ya no serán dependientes de lo que pueden tocar y sentir para explorar. En algún momento serán capaces de aprender cosas solo de las palabras. Y nosotros, los padres y educadores, somos elementos cruciales para ese esfuerzo.

Casi desde el nacimiento mismo proveemos un flujo casi constante de conversación sobre lo que hacemos. Hablamos mientras cambiamos sus panales o les damos desayuno. "Ahora te voy a poner este bonito panal limpio para ti," o "Aquí tienes un tazón de delicioso cereal, listo?" Indicamos cosas como las señales de pare y camiones de reparto mientras salimos a caminar. Jugamos juegos como "¿Donde esta tu nariz?" Cuando les leemos indicamos los objetos mencionados en el libro y los identificamos.

El lenguaje también ayuda a la conceptualización y los objetos llegan a ser mas diferenciados y abstractos. Por ejemplo, al comienzo, casi todo lo que tiene ruedas es un automóvil. "Mira ese automóvil grande," dice Alicia mientras mira por la ventana. "No," dice su madre, "eso es un camión.

continuará>>>>

Los Pérez se están cambiando y el camión viene a recoger sus muebles para llevarlos a su nueva casa. Ves cuantas ruedas tiene? Los automóviles no pueden llevar muchos muebles y no tienen tantas ruedas." Y Alicia aprende como los automóviles se diferencian de los camiones y que lo que los camiones hacen es único.

Esto sucede una y otra vez. Para los niños, todos los perros comienzan siendo "perros," pero acaban — a medida que los niños aprenden a refinar las diferentes categorías — como cocker spaniels y perros ovejeros, o juguetones cachorros. De hecho, para muchos niños, los gatos también comienzan siendo perros. Pero los padres explican que "los perros ladran mientras que los gatos ronronean o maúllan."

Los conceptos que son difíciles de describir y explicar se adquieren mediante el dar y recibir de nuestras conversaciones. Considere como tropezaría usted describiendo el concepto del color, por ejemplo, o como uno sabe que algo esta hecho de plástico. Pero en la conversación nosotros comenzamos a establecer los cimientos para el desarrollo de estas ideas mas abstractas. El rojo adquiere significado mediante su asociación con el automóvil rojo pero no con el automóvil azul, la pelota roja y no la pelota amarilla. Cuando nos preparamos para ir a la playa o al lago podemos decir "Llevemos el auto de plástico para ponerlo en el agua. El de metal se oxidaría."

A medida que crecen abastecemos a nuestros niños con aun mas información como parte de nuestras conversaciones habituales. Les damos hechos y detalles. "¿No es este un hermoso árbol? Es un arce. ¿Sabias que el jarabe de arce viene de estos arboles? ¿Recuerdas el jarabe que vertimos sobre los panqueques esta mañana? Vino de arboles de arce como este."

El Guión

Los niños también desarrollan expectativas generalizadas de los sucesos y experiencias de sus vidas. Estos son frecuentemente llamados guiones porque indican lo que todos están "supuestos" a hacer. Para niños muy jóvenes hay guiones: para actividades a la hora de dormir (y trate de cambiar ese guión y vera que sucede), para alistarse en la mañana, y hasta guiones para juegos como cuando jugamos al escondite. Los guiones ayudan a los niños a predecir su mundo y las acciones de la gente dentro de el. Están basados en la igualdad y consistencia de sus experiencias. Sin ellos, los niños serían incapaces de predecir lo que sucedería después. Nosotros tendemos a tomar los guiones como obvios, pero imaginese estando en una ceremonia a la que nunca antes había asistido. Aun como adultos nuestros primeros pensamientos frecuentemente son "¿Que va a pasar?" "¿Que debo hacer?"

Nosotros podemos ver los guiones de nuestros niños en acción observando sus juegos dramáticos. ¿Como juegan a la casa? ¿Que sucede cuando juegan al supermercado? Un guión común es una fiesta de cumpleaños. Si le preguntamos a un niño "¿Que sucede cuando vas a una fiesta de cumpleaños?" podríamos oír... "Uno se viste bien. Todos traen un regalo. Jugamos juegos, comemos torta y caramelos y miramos como el niño del cumpleaños abre sus regalos."

Los guiones son muy útiles. Significa que cuando Sara va a una fiesta de cumpleaños ella sabe que esperar. Puede ser muy diferente de lo que su madre espera de una fiesta de cumpleaños de adultos. Tan diferente de hecho que Sara puede fácilmente confundirse cuando asiste a la versión adulta. "¿Donde están los juegos?" ella podría pensar para si misma. "Esta no es comida de fiesta."

Ayudando a los niños a aprender conceptos

Los niños aprenden mejor mediante experiencias de primera mano. Ellos no son suficientemente sofisticados como para usar lenguaje como un sustituto de experiencia. El lenguaje puede solo reflejar y expandir las experiencias de los niños, no reemplazarlas. Los adultos pueden comprender una historia leyendo un libro. Podemos aprender sobre cultivar plantas del periódico y aplicar esa información a nuestros vegetales o plantas. Podemos leer un articulo de una revista sobre por que deberíamos recircular el plástico y que recircular tiene sentido. Los niños jóvenes no pueden. Ellos necesitan desarrollar los conceptos mediante experiencias, y después adquirir la "etiqueta" de nosotros.

- *Hable con su niño cuando lea o vea televisión.*

Cuando mire un libro con ilustraciones hagale preguntas abiertas a su niño o niña para descubrir lo que el o ella ya saben y proveerle información adicional. Su niño puede no poder ver como se hace la tela, pero el ve un programa sobre e[illegible] en la televisión, o lo lee en un libro, usted tiene la oportunidad de hacerle preguntas y proveerle información. Usted puede tomar un pedazo de pano y examinarlo juntos mientras ven como se teje... y como se puede deshacer.

- *Enséñele conceptos a su niño con materiales reales.*

No significa nada para un niño oír que el azul y el amarillo hacen verde. Aun si puede repetirselo pacientemente a usted. Pero, si usted mezcla pintura azul y amarilla y crea verde, eso significa mucho.

- *Hable con sus niños sobre lo que usted hace y por que.*

No lo de por descontado que sus niños saben lo que usted hace cuando cocina, poda arbustos, pone semillas para las aves, o trabaja en su automóvil. Cualquier cosa que este haciendo es una oportunidad de explicar y ensenar.

- *Provea una variedad de experiencias y materiales.*

Junte conchas a lo largo de la playa; mire como crecen las plantas en un jardín; abastezca a su niño de papel de colores, pinturas, y brillos; busque instrumentos musicales adecuados a su tamaño. Fomente el cantar en familia y la participación cuando prepare picnics para la familia. Todas estas cosas y mas son la materia prima que nuestros niños usan para desarrollar conceptos, tratar ideas nuevas, y aprender sobre el mundo alrededor de ellos.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. es escritora y se dedica a la investigación sicóloga. Sus artículos han sido publicados en todo el país.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

11th Year of Publication

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Volume 11, Number 9 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* *November 1996*

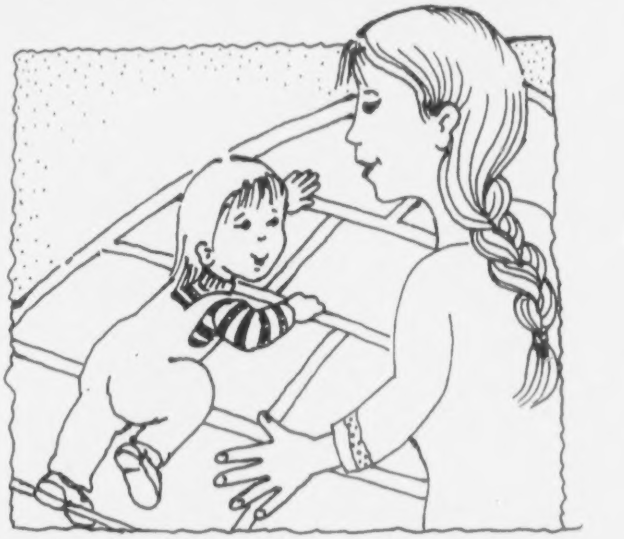
Observing — a major way of knowing your child

"You should have seen Katie at the park today," Maggie was reciting to her husband her experience with their eighteen-month-old daughter. "She headed straight for the jungle gym. I felt it was too high. It was higher than I am (Maggie was five feet ten inches tall.) And the bars were too far apart. She could barely reach the next one.

"First, I picked her up and headed toward the swings, telling her I'd swing her. She just squirmed and kept saying, 'Me climb. Me climb.'

"I tried her on the little merry-go-round and the sand box with no success. She just kept heading off for the jungle gym.

"So finally I let her try. I stood right behind her ready to catch her if she fell. But she didn't. It was amazing. She seemed to know just how to do it. First, with both hands she got a solid grip on the bar just over her head. Then she moved her feet to the lowest bar, one foot at a time, the instep of each foot resting on the rung. Then she grabbed the next bar up with her right hand. She could barely reach it but she grabbed it tightly. When that hand had a firm grip the left hand went up. Then one foot and then the other. Her eyes were fixed on the bar above her. She did not look around or smile. She went up that tall jungle gym like an experienced pro. I didn't need to worry.



"The funny thing is that the books on development talk about kids climbing at this age. I just didn't believe they could!"

Maggie had given her husband a detailed observation.

Observing is noting what is going on. It entails watching closely and listening carefully. Observing is the parents' basic way of gathering information about their children: How does she act when she really wants to do something? How does he explore a new object? How competent is she?

Observing strengthens our parenting.

By closely observing her daughter, Maggie was able to tell whether or not her child was safe and could manage this adventure of climbing the jungle gym. Observing was a means for Maggie to know what her child could do and how she did it.

By observing and checking with a resource about development, Maggie could confirm that her child's pattern of growth was comparable with that of other children's.

By observing Maggie was able to share the event. She described to her husband, Ted, each of her maneuvers to divert Katie's attention from the jungle gym and exactly how Katie had climbed it. Giving Ted these details helped keep him in touch with his daughter and the kind of person she is. Observing provided Maggie a means of sharing with Ted her experience with Katie.

Teachers and child care providers observing the children in their care are in an excellent position to keep parents in touch with their children in the same way Maggie kept Ted in touch.

By observing, parents determine the health of their children.

Johnny's parents noticed that on some days their three-year-old would respond quickly when they called — but on other days he wouldn't move. Observing him closely they realized that on those days when he ignored them, he would also turn his music and the TV on louder.

A trip to the doctor on a day when Johnny wasn't as responsive revealed he had liquid behind the ear drum which was interfering with his hearing.

Careful observing of how Johnny was responding to sound in different situations gave his parents information that something might be wrong and that Johnny wasn't just being rebellious.

Observing is often the first step in solving a problem.

Regardless of the time of day, Bill and Mary's children seldom were able to play happily together. Five-year-old Tim was forever hitting four-year-old Gail. After ten

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minutes of playing in the same room Gail would be in tears and accusing Tim of hitting her. All kinds of punishments did not seem to teach Tim not to hit. His explanation, "She's always bothering me," did not seem to his parents to justify his actions.

The parents were at a loss over what to do about the problem. "We just don't have enough information," they concluded.

At the next opportunity they planned that one of them would try to follow the interaction between the two children. One rainy afternoon when the children settled in their play area with paper and crayons, Mary took the laundry to be folded and worked in an adjoining room. That evening she reported to her husband what she had observed.

"As they were getting settled, Tim announced, 'I'm going to draw a space ship.'

"Immediately Gail commented, 'You can't make one that looks real,' or something like that.

"Tim snapped back 'I can so.'

"Then there was a short quiet. I peeked in and they were both sitting on the floor busy coloring. Tim was sitting strangely, though. He had himself sort of curled around his drawing with his back towards Gail, as if he were protecting it.

"While I was still watching, Gail scooted over, around Tim, looked at his drawing and laughed. 'I told you that you couldn't draw a space ship. It needs a captain's deck. Here, I'll show you.' And she actually raised her hand with a crayon as if she were to start to draw. Tim's hand came up, fist clenched, and I moved in," finished Mary.

By observing, Mary and Bill could better understand both Tim's and Gail's role in their conflict and, consequently, how better to deal with it.

Observing is usually the first step in planning for an upcoming event.
As she started to prepare supper, June watched her four-year-old son, Sam, coloring on the floor next to her. He had been working on this type of picture for over a week now, drawing one after another after another. First he would draw curving lines that intersected and twisted back on themselves, covering the whole 18"x12" size paper. Using a variety of colors he carefully planned what colors to put next to each other. Then he would meticulously color in each open space. June was continually amazed at the differences in his pictures though he always started with large sweeping lines that twisted and curved around the page.

"This is so typical of Sam," she thought. "He takes an idea and reworks it again and again. He had done the same when drawing figures. He'd drawn hundreds, it seemed, before moving into these abstract designs. She thought of her plan to return to work. "I'll want to find a preschool program that will provide him the freedom to experiment with coloring and with art materials," she thought. "I would not want to jeopardize his creativity." June's observations were guiding her planning.

The ability to observe is an important skill for parents and caregivers to have. Through their observations they come to know the children in their care, keep in touch with their development, better deal with problems that evolve and plan more adequately for them.

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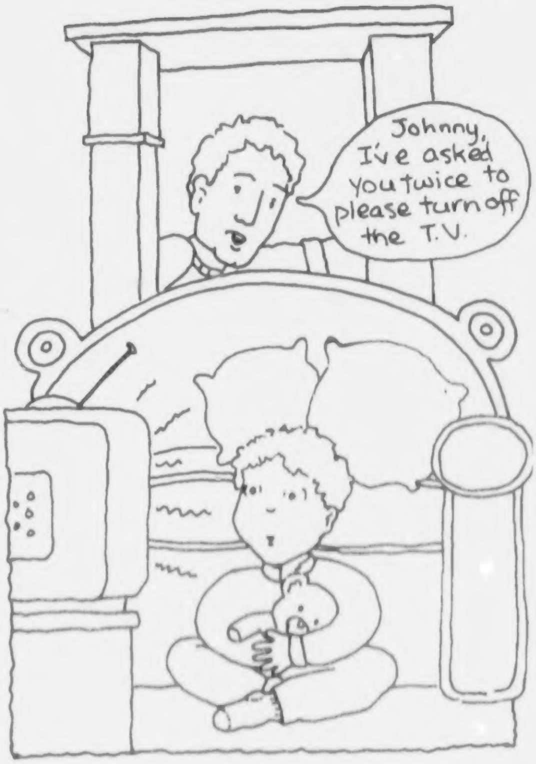
Johnny, I've asked you twice to please turn off the T.V.

The ingredients of a useful observation

For an observation to be useful it must be objective and include detail.
So often parents are told their child has been so good. If parents stop to think about this observation, they quickly realize they know nothing about their child's life while they were absent. Had their child been involved with other children, or had she sat passively without participating? Had he slept all afternoon, sat in front of a TV, had a walk, a story, a snack, or any combination thereof? Interpretations, judgments, and even summaries of events are quick and easy but they provide little specific information about what has happened. They provide little knowledge on which to build an understanding of the child.

Observations to be useful need to include detailed information about three components of an event:

- One is the *setting* of the event. This description should include details about the time and the objects and equipment in the setting. Maggie's description of the jungle gym is a good example. Her details about its height and the distance between the bars is important if the listener is to grasp the feat eighteen-month-old Katie accomplished in climbing it. Johnny's parents related his lack of response to them to the loudness of the TV and music. Mary and Bill noted that their children seemed to fight at any time of the day not just when they were tired or hungry, a time many children are more apt to fight.

- The second component of an observation is a *description of the people involved* with details as to each person's expression and body language, and how they moved. The description of how Katie climbed the jungle gym, how Johnny responded to

continued >>>>>

his parents, or how Tim protected his drawing from his sister's view — all added to the understanding of these events.

- The last component is recording *the sequence of events.* Mary could not understand Gail's role in the conflict between the siblings, if she had not noted the sequence of events leading up to the eruption.

A useful observation freezes what has occurred. It captures the essence of the event. The observation may be kept in memory, written and/or described verbally. Written ones, of course, are most permanent. But the important point to remember is that useful observations need to record all information because one never knows which piece will be important. Observations give us the information on which we as parents can base the guidance and planning needed to help our children.

Write an observation of your child or children when they are occupied. As you read back through, can you see the event? Read it to your parenting partner. Can your partner see the event? What additional information does she/he wish you had given her/him?

Observing is not easy. It takes practice to develop the skill. But it is a skill that parents constantly rely on. Being able to make detailed objective observations will facilitate any parent's nurturing efforts.

Coming in December:

Promoting Young Children's Self-esteem

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN

Character Cookbooks

"Laura and Mary watched, breathless, one on each side of Ma, while the golden little butter-pats, each with its strawberry on the top dropped onto the plate as Ma put all the butter through the mold."
from My Little House Cookbook.

Have you ever read the series of books by Laura Ingalls Wilder that begins with *The Little House in the Big Woods?* Have you wondered how to make the recipes that Ma cooked for Laura and Mary while they were living on the frontier of the American plains? There is a special type of cookbook centered around a character from a book. This year, HarperCollins published a picture book cookbook featuring eleven of Laura's "most treasured recipes," from Buttermilk Cornbread to Homemade Butter.

Here you can take part in a way of life, a part of history, and learn what Laura learned in the Big Woods. Picture books about Laura and Mary have recently been published so you don't have to wait until your preschooler is older to share this American classic. And when your preschooler grows to elementary age, she can graduate to the chapter books and more extensive *Little House Cookbook* which includes 100 recipes.

Many picture books and stories mention food: Paddington Bear with his marmalade, Peter Rabbit and the garden vegetables which he couldn't resist, Winnie the Pooh and his delectable honey. Food enriches the story and makes it more real.

What character would your child like to pretend to eat with? Will it be the French cuisine of Madeline, the cheese tarts of Angelina Ballerina, or a banana concoction from Curious George. You could look for a special cookbook that is centered around a character, or you and your preschooler could dream up a recipe or plan a meal which one of your story book characters would be honored to be a part of.

Some special cookbooks that are centered around a character include, *The Pooh Cook Book*, by Virginia H. Ellison. Published in 1969, it includes entries such as Honey Toffee Apples and Popovers for Piglet. It kept the flavor of the picture books, with original drawings by Ernest H. Shepard. *Peter Rabbit's Natural Foods Cookbook,* by Arnold Dabrin, also has original drawings by Beatrix Potter. This book, published by Frederick Warne in 1977, features Potter's characters eating such recipes as Squirrel Nutkins Banana Nut Loaf.

Be on the lookout for recipe titles when you read. Some of the titles might be mentioned in the story, such as, "Ma baked vinegar pies and dried apple pies..." If not, common sense helps. Bears like honey, so a honey recipe could be labeled, Little Bears Best Honey Cookies, for example. Monkeys like bananas; mice like cheese. What is your preschooler's favorite character's favorite food?

Plan to make this snack after reading any bear story: *The Berenstain Bears, Little Bear, Paddington* or *Pooh.*

Honey Bear Biscuits

biscuits
margarine or butter
honey

Ask your preschooler to help you bake canned biscuits, biscuit mix, or homemade biscuits. Let your preschooler cut open her biscuit with a butter knife, and practice spreading the margarine or butter, and finally, drizzle honey on top. This is a sticky snack little bears and big bears love! (Note: do not feed honey to preschoolers younger than one year of age.)

After reading *Curious George,* try a banana treat.

Banana Blast

1 banana
1 cup milk

Children can peel banana and measure milk. Whip banana and milk in blender for a few seconds. Banana will thicken mixture to milk-shake consistency. Serve in cups. Serves 1-2.

After reading or watching the story of *The Wizard of Oz* eat rainbow toast with Dorothy.

Rainbow Toast

white bread,
one slice per person
margarine
red, yellow and blue food color
(found in the spice section)
pastry brush
picture of a rainbow,
either from a book
or drawn with crayons

Toast the bread and encourage your preschooler to spread the toast with margarine. For each color desired: let your preschooler help measure 1 tablespoon water and 2 drops of food color in a custard cup or other small bowl. You can use three colors, red, yellow and blue or five colors, red, yellow, blue, orange and green. (Make orange by mixing a drop of red and 2 drops of yellow. Make green by mixing a drop of blue and 2 drops of yellow.) Display a picture of a rainbow. Let your preschooler paint a rainbow on the toast. Eat rainbow toast for a snack.

These are only a few suggestions. I encourage you to develop your own ideas and enjoy snacking with your favorite storybook character!

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LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

Observing and Recording the Behavior of Young Children, by Dorothy Cohen & Virginia Stern. 3rd rev. ed. Teachers College Press, 1983. An invaluable resource that describes methods of observing young children in different settings.

The Kindergarten Teacher's Very Own Student Observation & Assessment Guide, by Judy Keshner. Modern Learning Press, Rosemont NJ, 1995. Developed by an educator and *Parent and preschooler Newsletter* author (8/92 issue), this paperback provides a wealth of information for teachers about observing and assessing young children's activities.

For Children
Books About Families

Once Upon a Time and Grandma, by Lenore Blegvad. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1993. It's hard to think of your grandma as being a little girl once upon a time, even when she shows you a photograph of a herself as a child in pigtails. Grandma tells her grandchildren all about what her life was like a long time ago.

How I Was Adopted, by Joanna Cole. Morrow, 1995. A cheerful and loving story told by a little girl about her adoption. The author has written "A Note to Families" at the start of the book. In it, she explains that "...this is not a 'problem' book. Instead, it tells the youngest children what adoption is and how it happens..."

You're My Nikki, by Phyllis Rose Eisenberg. Puffin Pied Piper, 1995. Nikki is afraid her Mama will forget all about her when she starts her new job. But while Mama may be tired and busy when she gets home, she can offer love and reassurance that she will never forget her Nikki.

Feast for 10, by Cathryn Falwell. Clarion Books, 1995. Using colorful collages for illustration, the author/illustrator counts from one to ten as the members of an African American family shop and cook and share a fabulous meal together.

Grandaddy's Stars, by Helen V. Griffith. Greenwillow, 1995. Janetta had visited Grandaddy on his farm (See ***Grandaddy's Place,*** Greenwillow, 1987), and now he is coming to Baltimore to visit Janetta. The little girl is so excited, but worried too. She is afraid he will find the city boring. But Grandaddy, a man of humor and wisdom, likes everything she shows him.

Spot's Baby Sister, by Eric Hill. Picture Puffin, 1995. The popular puppy is back, delighted with his new sister, in this lift-the-flap book.

When We Married Gary, by Anna Grossnickle Hines. Greenwillow, 1996. "It used to be just Mama, Beth, and me." Although they had a daddy once, he went away. Then Gary came into their lives. "...I think it's kind of like we're a puzzle — Mama, Beth, and me. Our daddy didn't fit with us, but Gary does." A warm and touching family story.

Mommy's Lap, by Ruth Horowitz. Lothrop, 1993. Mommy's lap is the best place for Sophie to be. But when a baby starts growing inside Mommy there's no room for Sophie on her lap. Happily, when baby Sam arrives, there's room for Sophie *and* the baby together on Mommy's lap. And when Sophie holds the baby on her own lap, she even thinks her lap is the best place for Sam to be.

Harry and Tuck, by Holly Keller. Greenwillow, 1993. Harrison and Tucker were twins. They did everything together. They liked it that way. Then they started kindergarten, and were placed in different rooms with different teachers. They missed each other, but they each found things to do. Some things they did were the same; some were different. They liked it that way!

The Palace of Stars, by Patricia Lakin. Tambourine Books, 1993. Amanda loves her Saturday outings at the zoo with her great-uncle Max. To reciprocate, Amanda saves her money and takes Uncle Max to a Saturday matinee at the movies — a magical palace of the stars.

Grandfather's Trolley, by Bruce McMillan. Candlewick Press, 1995. The author/photographer uses hand-tinted photographs to capture the days of the early 1900s. In this story a little girl hops aboard a trolley car driven by her grandfather. The tenderness between grandfather and grandchild comes through on these lovely pages.

Three Brave Women, by C.L.G. Martin. Macmillan, 1991. Caitlin, her Mama and her Grammy don't feel very brave when it comes to spiders. But Caitlin needs her Mama and Grammy to help her prove her courage to Billy Huxley. Otherwise, he will tell everyone she is afraid of spiders. The three brave women enlist in the cause together in this very human story.

In America, by Marissa Moss. Dutton, 1994. Grandpa and Walter are going to mail a birthday present to Grandpa's brother, Herschel in Lithuania. He stayed behind in the old country when Grandpa came to America as a young boy. In Lithuania Grandpa's family was treated badly because they were different; they were Jewish. "But in America," Grandpa went on, "everybody is different. Almost everybody comes from someplace else. Or if they don't, then their parents or grandparents did."Walter wonders if he would have been brave enough to make the same journey his Grandpa made.

Brothers & Sisters, by Ellen B. Senisi. Scholastic Cartwheel, 1993. Full-color photographs capture the joyful and exasperating moments that siblings share. The text includes children's honest and sometimes touching comments about their brothers and sisters.

My Dog, My Sister, and I, by Susanne Strub. Tambourine, 1993. A little boy begins: "In the beginning, there was only me." At four years of age, he is joined by a baby sister Annie and a puppy named Sparky. He compares the feeding, sleeping, and playing behaviors of his baby sister and his puppy in a tender and humorous way, ending with, "One day Annie will be big like Sparky and me. But she'll always be my little sister."

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**Parent and preschooler**
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year
subscription
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
(Rates for multiple copies
and back issues on request.)

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**Printed in U.S.A.**

**Subscription Rates**
**(U.S., Canada & Mexico)**
**English Language Edition**
one year...US$30.00
two year..........55.00
three year.......78.00
**English/Spanish Language Edition**
one year...US$40.00
two year..........75.00
three year.......99.00
**All other countries add postage**
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US$24 for 2 years
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Pp
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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

En Español

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de noviembre, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, número 9) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Observar — Una Gran Forma De Conocer A Su Niño

"Debieras haber visto a Katie en el parque hoy," Maggie le estaba contando a su esposo su experiencia con su hija de dieciocho meses. "Ella se fue derecho al gimnasio de barras. A mi me parecía que era demasiado alto. Era mas alto que yo (Maggie mide 1 metro 77 cm. de alto). Y las barras estaban demasiado separadas. Ella apenas podía alcanzar la siguiente.

"Primero tomaba a Katie y me dirigía hacia los columpios, diciendole que la iba a columpiar. Pero ella se retorcía y seguía diciendo, 'Yo subir. Yo subir.'

"Pues bien, luego intenté con el carrusel y la caja de arena sin ningún éxito. Ella simplemente seguía tratando de ir al gimnasio de barras.

"Por lo que finalmente la deje tratar. Me pare justo detrás de ella lista para pescarla si se caía. Pero no se cayo. Fue asombroso. Parecía saber exactamente como hacerlo. Primero, con ambas manos se aferró fuertemente de la barra justo encima de su cabeza. Luego movía sus pies a la barra baja, un pie a la vez, el empeine de cada pie descansando sobre la barra. Después tomaba la siguiente barra de arriba con su mano derecha. Apenas podía alcanzarla pero la tomaba firmemente. Cuando esa mano estuvo firmemente aferrada, levantó la mano izquierda. Y entonces un pie y luego el otro. Sus ojos estaban fijos sobre la barra encima de ella. Ella no miro alrededor ni sonrío. Subió ese gimnasio de barras, alto como era, como una profesional experimentada. No tenia de que preocuparme.

"Lo cómico es que los libros sobre desarrollo hablan de que los niños de esta edad pueden escalar. Pero yo simplemente no creía que podrían!"

Maggie le había dado su esposo una detallada observación.

Observar es notar lo que pasa alrededor suyo. Involucra observar y escuchar cuidadosamente. Observar es la manera básica que tienen los padres para recopilar información sobre sus niños: ¿Cómo actúa ella cuando realmente quiere hacer algo? ¿Cómo explora un nuevo objeto? ¿Cuan competente es ella?

Observar fortalece nuestro papel de padres.

Al observar estrechamente a su hija, Maggie fue capaz de ver si su niña estaba segura o no, y si podía llevar a cabo la aventura de ascender el gimnasio de barras. Observar era un medio para Maggie para saber lo que su niña podía hacer y como lo hizo.

Al observar y comprobar con un recurso básico sobre el desarrollo (los libros), Maggie pudo confirmar que el patrón de crecimiento de su niña era comparable con el de otros niños.

Al observar, Maggie fue capaz de compartir el evento. Ella le describió a su esposo Ted, cada una de sus maniobras para desviar la atención de Katie del gimnasio de barras y exactamente como Katie lo había escalado. Al darle a Ted estos detalles le ayudó a mantenerse en contacto con su hija y el tipo de persona que ella es. El observar le proveyó a Maggie de un medio para compartir con Ted su experiencia con Katie.

Los profesores y proveedores de cuidado de niños que observan a los niños bajo su cuidado, están en una posición óptima para mantener a los padres en contacto con sus niños, del mismo modo que Maggie mantuvo a Ted en contacto con Katie.

Al observar, los padres determinan la salud de sus niños.

Los padres de Johnny notaron que algunos días su niño de tres años respondía rápidamente cuando ellos lo llamaban pero que en otros días no se movía. Después de observarlo cuidadosamente se dieron cuenta que en esos días cuando los ignoraba, también ponía su música y la TV mas fuerte. Una visita al doctor un día cuando Johnny no respondía dio a conocer que tenia liquido detrás del tambor del oído, el que interfería con su audición.

Observar esmeradamente como Johnny respondía a los sonidos en situaciones diferentes le hizo saber a sus padres que algo podía andar mal y que Johnny no estaba siendo simplemente rebelde.

Observar es frecuentemente el primer paso en resolver un problema.

Cualesquiera que fuera la hora del día, los niños de Mary y Bill raramente podían jugar juntos sin pelear. Tim, de cinco años estaba siempre golpeando a Gail, de cuatro años. Después de diez minutos de jugar en el mismo cuarto, Gail quedaba hecha un mar de lagrimas y acusaba a Tim de golpearla. Ninguna clase de castigos parecía poder enseñarle a Tim a no golpear. Su explicación, "Ella siempre me molesta," no le parecía a sus padres que justificaba sus acciones.

Los padres sencillamente no sabían que hacer sobre el problema. "Simplemente no tenemos suficiente información," concluyeron.

A la primera oportunidad planificaron que uno de ellos trataría de seguir la interacción entre los dos niños. Una tarde

continuará>>>>

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lluviosa, cuando los niños estaban en su área de juegos con papel y crayones, Mary tomó la ropa lavada que debía doblar y se puso a trabajar en una sala contigua. Esa tarde ella le contó a su esposo lo que había observado.

"Cuando se estaban disponiendo a dibujar, Tim anuncio,'Yo voy a dibujar una nave espacial.'

"Inmediatamente Gail comentó, 'Tu no puedes hacer una que parezca real.' o algo así.

"'Si que puedo,' contesto Tim instantáneamente.

"Lugo hubo una corta calma. Yo atisbé y ambos estaban sentados en el piso muy ocupados coloreando. Pero Tim estaba sentado en una forma peculiar. Se había como enrollado alrededor de su dibujo con su espalda hacia Gail, como si lo estuviera protegiendo.

"Mientras todavía estaba mirando, Gail se acercó a Tim, miro su dibujo y se rió. 'Te dije que no podías dibujar una nave espacial. Necesita una cubierta para el capitán. Mira, yo te voy a mostrar.' Y de hecho ella levanto su mano con un lápiz de color como si fuera a comenzar a dibujar. Tim levantó la mano, el puño apretado, y yo entonces intervine," terminó Mary.

Al observar a tiempo, Mary y Bill pudieron entender mejor tanto el papel de Tim como el de Gail en su conflicto y, consiguientemente, como lidiar mejor con el.

Observar es comunmente el primer paso en la planificación de un evento venidero.

Al comenzar a preparar la cena, June miró a su hijo de cuatro años, Sam, coloreando sobre el piso próximo a ella. El llevaba trabajando en este tipo de dibujo más de una semana, dibujando uno tras uno y después otro. Primero dibujaba lineas curvas que se cruzaban y se retorcían de vuelta sobre si mismas, cubriendo la totalidad del papel de 30 x 45 de tamaño. Usando una variedad de colores planificaba cuidadosamente que colores poner uno junto al otro. Luego coloreaba meticulosamente cada espacio abierto. June constantemente se asombraba de las diferencias en sus cuadros aunque el siempre comenzaba con grandes lineas que se retorcían y curvaban alrededor de la página.

"Esto es tan típico de Sam," pensó June. "El toma una idea y la trabaja una y otra vez. Había hecho lo mismo cuando dibujaba figuras. Había dibujado centenares, parecía, antes de empezar con estos diseños abstractos. Ella pensó en sus planes de volver a trabajar. "Voy a encontrar una pre-escuela que le provea libertad a Sam para experimentar con colores y con materiales de arte," pensó. "No querría comprometer su creatividad." Las observaciones de June estaban orientando su planificación a futuro.

La capacidad para observar es una habilidad importante para padres y proveedores de cuidado. A través de sus observaciones llegan a conocer a los niños bajo su cuidado, se mantienen en contacto con su desarrollo, manejan mejor los problemas que van evolucionando y pueden planificar mas adecuadamente para estos.

Los Ingredientes De Una Observación Util

Una observación para ser útil debe ser objetiva e incluir detalles.

Muy frecuentemente los padres escuchan que su niño ha sido muy bueno. Si los padres se pararan a pensar sobre esta observación, rápidamente se darían cuenta que no saben nada sobre la vida de su niño mientras ellos están ausentes. ¿Estuvo su niño involucrado con otros niños, o estuvo sentado pasivamente sin participar? ¿Estuvo dormido toda la tarde, sentado frente a un televisor, salió a caminar, le leyeron un cuento, comió algo, o cualquier combinación de estas actividades? Interpretaciones, juicios, y hasta resúmenes de eventos son rápidos y fáciles pero proveen poca información especifica sobre lo que ha sucedido. Proveen de pocos conocimientos sobre los cuales construir una comprensión del niño.

Para que sean útiles, las observaciones deben incluir información detallada sobre tres componentes de un evento:

- Uno es el *escenario* del evento. Esta descripción debería incluir detalles sobre la hora y los objetos y el equipo en el lugar. La descripción de Maggie del gimnasio de barras es un buen ejemplo. Los detalles sobre su altura y la distancia entre las barras son importantes para que el que escucha capte la hazaña realizada por Katie a sus dieciocho meses al ascenderla. Los padres de Johnny relacionaron su falta de reacción a ellos al volumen de la TV y la música. Mary y Bill notaron que sus niños parecían pelear en cualquier momento del día y no solo cuando estaban cansados o hambrientos, un momento en el que muchos niños son mas propensos a pelear.

- El segundo componente de una observación es *una descripción de las personas involucradas*, con detalles con respecto al lenguaje corporal y la expresión de cada persona, y como se movían. La descripción de como Katie subía por el gimnasio de barras, como Johnny respondió a sus padres, o como Tim protegió su dibujo de su hermana, todos agregaron algo a la comprensión de estos eventos.

- El ultimo componente es grabar *la sucesión de eventos*. Mary no hubiera podido comprender el papel de Gail en el conflicto entre los hermanos si ella no hubiera anotado la sucesión de eventos que conducían a la erupción.

Una observación útil congela lo que ha ocurrido. Captura la esencia del evento. La observación puede guardarse en la memoria, escrita y/o descrita verbalmente. Una observación escrita, por supuesto, es más permanente. Pero el punto importante de recordar es que una observación útil necesita registrar toda la información porque uno nunca sabe que parte va a ser importante. Las observaciones nos dan información sobre la que nosotros, como padres, podemos basar la guía y planificación necesaria para ayudar a nuestros niños.

Escriba una observación de su niño o niños cuando están ocupados. Al leerla de vuelta, ¿puede ver el evento? Leaselo a su pareja. ¿Puede su pareja ver el evento? ¿Que información adicional desea el o ella que usted le hubiera dado?

Observar no es fácil. Se necesita practica para desarrollar esta habilidad. Pero es una habilidad en la que los padres constantemente confían. Ser capaz de hacer observaciones objetivas y detalladas facilitaran los esfuerzos de cualquier padre amante de sus hijos.

Harriet Heath, Ph.D. es directora del The Parent Center, Thorne School•Child Study Institute, Bryn Mawr College, PA. Es psicóloga del desarrollo licenciada, educadora, e investigadora por más de veinte anos. Es la autora de un manual para padres, *Parents Planning, a decision making approach to parenting*.

Translated by
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
(212) 569-6475

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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

11th Year of Publication

Volume 11, Number 10 — An International Resource for Professionals and Parents — December 1996

Promoting young children's self-esteem . . .

No HURRY. You don't even have to go in now if you don't want to.

Janie's grandmother said, "I'm so glad you came to see us today!" Janie asked, "Why?" but then answered her own question with, "Because you like me?" "Of course," grandmother said, "Because we love you and you make us feel happy when you visit." You could almost see the warm glow rush through Janie's four-year-old body. Her eyes sparkled and a smile lit up her face. Janie was getting positive reinforcement that she was wanted, accepted, and loved, which made her feel extra special.

Parent and preschooler Newsletter, July 1990

To build your children's self-esteem, you have to fall in love with them. How do you do that? Well, you fall in love with them just as you would with anyone else. Here are nine basic ingredients for falling in love with your kids.

1. Spend time together.
2. Develop common interests.
3. Play together.
4. Talk together.
5. Touch each other.
6. Tell your children often that you love them.
7. Treat your kids as if they are the most important people in the world.
8. Create lasting memories.
9. Celebrate their uniqueness.

Parent and preschooler Newsletter, February 1994

Defined simply, self-esteem is he sense of being *lovable* and *capable*. When these two qualities go together, a child has high self-esteem. Children need first to know that they are loved and accepted for who they are. Then, with this as a basis, their natural impulse is to take that love and learn to contribute it to the world in constructive ways. As you work to give your child this marvelous gift of self-esteem, the most important thing to understand is this: *Self-esteem evolves in kids primarily through the quality of our relationships with them.*

Parent and preschooler Newsletter, July 1994

Because self-esteem is crucial to all aspects of a child's development, this topic has been included in the above articles and others that appeared in ***Parent and preschooler Newsletter***. This article summarizes the pertinent factors that enable parents to help children to see themselves as people of worth.

As early as 1950, Erik H. Erickson, well-known psychologist, put forth his theories about the crucial nature of early childhood experiences in providing the building blocks for self-esteem. Erickson saw human beings developing through 8 stages in their lifetime —from infancy to old age. The first 4 stages focus on the following:

- infancy — basic trust vs. mistrust
- 1 $^{1}/_{2}$ - 3 years (approx.) — autonomy vs. shame & doubt
- 3 - 5 $^{1}/_{2}$ years (approx.) — initiative vs. guilt
- 5 $^{1}/_{2}$ - 12 years (approx.) — industry vs. inferiority

He considered each stage to be the foundation for the next stage; that is, how successfully a child was prepared at the first stage would determine how well he completed the next one, and so on through all those remaining.

Trust vs. mistrust
Erickson considered the issue of trust vs. mistrust to be the developmental task of the first year of life. How well the child's needs are met gives the child a sense of trust or mistrust in himself and his environment. At this stage the needs are largely physiological: to be fed when hungry and to be physically comfortable. When parents provide the environment where the child is protected from danger, is warm and dry, and is well fed, they are also helping the child build trust. They are providing an important base for many of the child's later accomplishments.

Moving on to the other stages
Erickson viewed trust of self and others, which begins to be developed from birth, as the basic element in self-esteem. Trust is so important because the preschool child must move on to believe the environment will not punish her for developing autonomy which is the ability to function independently. The young child must also dare to try new things without feeling guilty if some efforts are unsuccessful.

Current theories about trust
Authors writing more recently use slightly different language yet share the same ideas. For example, Alicia Lieberman in *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*

continued >>>>>

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(see Resources) stated that from earliest infancy the child needs to feel that he has a secure base. Such a base is provided by parents and other caregivers. They hold newborns so that they will not fall, and later stay close, as babies start to move around. As toddlers learn to walk, caring adults are there to see that they are permitted to move without hurting themselves badly. *Lieberman believes this secure base is essential at every stage of a young child's life so that she will trust in herself and the environment.* Lieberman makes the point that from the security provided by others the child can develop her own security. Lieberman calls this sense of security "inner balance." As a result of this inner balance children dare to try new things.

However, it can be observed that children vary in the ease with which they learn to trust and develop this inner balance — even when provided a secure base. What follows are two examples. One is about a child who had complete trust in his environment, while the other illustrates a parent's attempt to help her young son who did not trust the environment easily to feel more trusting and secure.

Three-year-old Tom, a child who did develop trust, was observed on his first visit to an Atlantic Ocean beachfront motel. He could hardly wait to get into the water. He ran ahead of his father until the water was chest high. There he laughed and squealed while he and his father played.

Tim, who was the same age as Tom, was a very different kind of child. As he walked across the sand he clung to his mother's hand. Twice he tried to get into the water, but jumped back each time a wave approached. He seemed terrified. His mother said," No hurry, you don't even have to go in now if you don't want to." Tim muttered that he wanted to. On the third try he made it, still clinging to his mother. They stayed about 10 minutes and returned, hand in hand, to play on the beach. They went in again later and this time went farther out and stayed longer. The next afternoon both boys were observed in the water, with Tim still staying very close to his mother.

Tell me what happened at preschool today.

Loving the child for what he is
Another way adults help a child develop self-esteem is to give him evidence that he is cared about for who he is, not for what he can do. Adults can help a child feel valued by refraining from comparing her to another child. Parents often do so with the idea that it provides a model or standard of behavior or performance. So often this backfires when the child interprets the message as, "I'm not good enough." Tim's mother never pointed out to him that the other boy was not afraid of the water. She valued Tim for what he could do, however long it took him to feel comfortable in this new environment.

Importance of communication
Much of what the child builds self-esteem on depends upon how well the adults around him communicate. Children, from infancy, want to talk. When they gurgle and make unintelligible noises, usually, at that stage, adults make noises in response. While later on, adults may ignore their preschooler's chattering — this is also a form of communication and should be listened to.

Each evening Sara's mother asked her, "Tell me what happened at preschool today." After about a week of discussing preschool events Sara sighed and said, "I don't want to talk about that. I want to tell you why I'm mad at Freddie." Her mother wisely listened and heard about Sara's hurt feelings and her wish that she could "punch him right out." Thus their conversation took on greater depth than it had previously. In addition, Sara learned an important lesson: that her mother did not reprimand her for being angry or feeling hurt. This was part of Sara's lesson in trust.

Love in the midst of discipline
Parents and other caregivers can make loving and valuing comments to the child in whatever state he is in. This holds true even in the midst of discipline. "I love you, but I must make you stop that," or "I don't like what you are doing right now," are two examples.

With life so hectic and demanding, parents may feel stressed and show anger at the child. Sometimes they feel guilty about their anger. However, this is the way children learn about anger, learn to acknowledge their own anger, and hopefully how to express it constructively. Thomas Gordon, author of *Parent Effectiveness Training*, wrote about the use of "I" messages when angry. For example, "I am very angry with you right now," is very different from "You are a bad bad girl." The point is to express the anger without attacking the personhood of the child with statements such as "Why can't you do anything right," or " That was a dumb thing to do." When parents use constructive expressions of anger children have a model of a way to deal with their own as well as other people's anger.

Praise should be warm and genuine
It is amazing how sensitive young children are to insincerity. Adults will do well to think carefully about what they can genuinely praise in the child, keep a list of these things, and review the list often. They will see that the number of things which are praiseworthy will continue to grow.

Various authors in the book, *Parental Development* (see Resources) make the point that parents can grow and change even as their children do. The fact that one is raising a child does not guarantee that the person will instantly know how to be a parent.

If parents observe carefully their children's patterns they will learn how to nurture them. For example, they will learn that talking very simply to children brings out new speech and language. In fact, parents will not use sentences that are longer than children can follow.

When parents follow the guidelines outlined for developing self-esteem in children, they will do well to pay attention to changes in their own behavior. In this way they will no doubt continue to develop their own self-esteem as parents.

Louise M. Ward, M.A., speech/language pathology, and Elizabeth J. (Betty) Webster, Ph.D. are Professors Emeritus, University of Memphis. Both have worked extensively with parents of young children. They previously collaborated on a book, *Working with Parents of Young Children with Disabilities*, (Singular Publishing Group) and for Preschool Publications on *Teacher/Parent Communication*.

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Preschooler in the Kitchen
Happy New Year Calendar

by Amy Houts

January

We can make a lacy flake
To decorate our snow-white cake

February

Heart-shaped cookies, yours and mine...
Will you be my Valentine?

March

Cold winds make fingers feel like ice —
Heat up some chicken soup and rice

April

We stay indoors but don't complain
We cook, and bake, and watch the rain

May

Homemade bread must rise for hours
While we wait, let's plant some flowers

June

Picking berries, tasting some,
Strawberry shortcake, yum yum yum

July

On Fourth of July we eat red cherries,
With white whipped cream and bright blue berries

August

After playing in the sun,
Homemade ice cream would be fun.

September

I will make my preschool snack
To take along in my backpack.

October

See leaves change from green to red?
Would you like some pumpkin bread?

November

Grandma, Grandpa, Cousins stay,
To eat and share Thanksgiving Day.

December

Around the table, friends, relations
Enjoy all kinds of celebrations.

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Books for Adults

Parental Development, edited by Jack Demick, Krisanne Bursik, & Rosemarie Dibiase. Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates, 1993.

Childhood and Society, by Erik Erickson. W.W. Norton, 1950

PET [Parent Effectiveness Training] in Action, by Thomas Gordon. Putnam, 1976.

The Emotional Life of the Toddler, by Alice Lieberman. The Free Press, 1993.

Your Child's Emotional Health, by The Philadelphia Child Guidance Center with Jack Maguire. Macmillan, 1993.

Books for Children About the Self

Sara's City, by Sue Alexander. Clarion Books, 1995. Told from the point of view of a little girl living in Chicago in the 1940s. We hear about Sara's school, her trip to the department store with Mama, the games she plays with her friends, and how Daddy listens to the radio with her before bedtime.

American Too, by Elisa Bartone. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996. When Rosina, an Italian immigrant, is laughed at by some neighborhood girls, she asks her father, "Why do we always have to do *Italian* things? This is America not Italy!" In a moving ending to the story, Rosina is the queen at the feast of San Gennaro. She is dressed as the American symbol that she treasures most, and is glad to have two countries as part of her heritage.

Life Is Fun, by Nancy Carlson. Puffin Books, 1996. With a positive outlook on life, a cheerful youngster gives the reader simple instructions on how to be happy on earth.

Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born, by Jamie Lee Curtis. Joanna Cotler Books/HarperCollins, 1996. A little girl, who knows the story of her birth and adoption by heart, wants to hear it again, with all the loving details.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Most Beautiful Kid in the World, by Jennifer A. Ericsson. Tambourine Books, 1996. Grandma is coming for dinner, and Annie wants to look beautiful. She tries on all different clothes until she thinks she looks perfect. Although Mama may not agree with the outfit Annie choses, Grandma thinks she's the most beautiful kid in the world.

Chrysanthemum, by Kevin Henkes. Mulberry Books edition, 1996. Chrysanthemum believes that her name is perfect until her first day at school, when the children tease her because she is named after a *flower.* But the beloved music teacher turns that around when she tells the group that she thinks the name is perfect and that she herself is named Delphinium!

Lilly's Secret, by Miko Imai. Candlewick Press, 1994. Lilly, an endearing little cat, has a best friend named Joey. Lilly's neighbor Coco unfeelingly laughs when she notices Lilly's large paws. The little cat is embarrassed and wants to hide her paws from Joey. But Joey likes Lilly just as she is. A story to remind us that our differences make us special.

My Happy Birthday Book, by Lisa Jahn-Clough. Houghton Mifflin, 1996. A little girl is overjoyed that today is her birthday. She describes how she will enjoy the day with cake, presents, and a parade. An exhuberant little book that celebrates the joy of having a special day of one's own.

When Frank Was Four, by Alison Lester. Houghton Mifflin, 1996.The reader learns about seven boys and girls and their accomplishments and adventures as they grow from age one to seven. A creative format in which children will recognize some real experiences and enjoy some humorous ones.

Coat of Many Colors, by Dolly Parton. HarperTrophy, 1994. Based upon a song written by the country music star, this story tells of a poor little girl who proudly wears her coat of many colors. It was made by her mother and though it was put together from rags, she sewed every stitch with love.

It's Fun To Be One; It's Great To Be Two, by Fiona Pragoff. Aladdin Books edition, 1994. These two books will appeal to the youngest preschoolers. And their parents will like the fact that the thick pages cannot be torn easily. The glossy color photographs are of real babies and toddlers performing familiar activities. The text tells the toddler about all the things he or she can do.

Oscar's Spots, by Janet Robertson. Troll Medallion, 1993. Can a leopard change his spots? Oscar makes many attempts to change his, but is unsuccessful, until he tries some magic. The magic is much too powerful and Oscar keeps changing and changing. The little leopard is so unhappy that he asks the magician for help. Finally, Oscar is back to the way he was, and decides, "It's lovely to be myself again."

Brave as a Mountain Lion, by Ann Herbert Scott. Clarion Books, 1996. A contemporary Shoshone boy, Spider, is afraid because has to get up on a stage in front of an audience to participate in a spelling bee. He asks his father, brother and grandmother what to do to feel brave, and they give him wise advice.

I Am Really A Princess, by Carol Diggory Shields. Puffin Unicorn edition, 1996. The heroine of this book lives every child's fantasy — that she is above the ordinary and should not be made to do the workaday chores required of regular children. Great fun!

The Brass Ring, by Nancy Tafuri. Greenwillow, 1996. The author-artist uses bright, bold colors, and clear and simple language to tell about a little girl who is growing bigger. Once she was little, and didn't know about the fun of a vacation, the pleasure of taking a swim, or the excitement of riding the carousel and catching the brass ring. Now that she is "big" she can do all these wonderful things.

Bibliography by
Louise M. Ward, Elizabeth J. Webster, and Betty Farber

Coming in January:

Bedtime Blues: What to do When They're Too Young to Count Sheep

Available in English Language and English/Spanish Language Editions

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Parent and preschooler
(ISSN 0887-0365)
is a monthly newsletter.
For a one- two- or three-year sub.
send check, money order,
or purchase order made out to
Preschool Publications, Inc.,
PO Box 1167
Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888
U.S. 1-800-726-1708
International: 1-516-765-5450
Fax: 1-516-765-4927
©1996 Preschool Publications, Inc.
Printed in U.S.A.
Subscription Rates
(U.S., Canada & Mexico)
English Language Edition
one year...US$30.00
two year..........55.00
three year........78.00
English/Spanish Language Edition
one year...US$40.00
two year..........75.00
three year........99.00
All other countries add postage
US$12 for each year of sub.

EFFECTIVE January 1, 1997
Direct all inquiries to:
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de deciembre, edición del 1996 (volumne 11, numero 10) del Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés a Preschool Publications, Inc., PO Box 1167, Cutchogue, NY 11935-0888 o llame al 1-800-726-1708.

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Como estimular la auto estima en los niños jóvenes

La abuela de Ana dijo, "¡Estoy tan contenta que hayas venido a vernos hoy!" Ana pregunto, "¿Por que?" pero luego contestó su propia pregunta diciendo, "Porque te gusto?" "Por supuesto," dijo la abuela, "Porque nosotros te queremos y tu nos haces sentir felices cuando vienes a visitarnos." Casi se podía ver el cálido resplandor que cubrió el cuerpecito de cuatro años de edad de Ana. Sus ojos relumbraron y una sonrisa iluminó su cara. Ana estaba recibiendo refuerzo positivo de que ella era querida, aceptada, y amada, lo que la hacía sentirse extra especial.
Parent and preschooler Newsletter, julio de 1990.

Para construir la auto estima de sus niños, usted tiene que enamorarse de ellos. Como se hace eso? De la misma manera que usted se enamora de otra persona. A continuación, nueve ingredientes básicos para enamorarse de sus niños.

1. Pase tiempo con ellos.
2. Desarrolle intereses comunes.
3. Jueguen juntos.
4. Hablen juntos.
5. Tóquense mutuamente.
6. Digale frecuentemente que los quiere.
7. Trate a sus niños como si fueran las personas mas importante del mundo.
8. Compartan memorias duraderas.
9. Celebre su originalidad.

Parent and preschooler Newsletter, febrero de 1994.

Definida simplemente, la auto estima es el sentido de ser *querible* y *capaz*. Cuando estas dos cualidades van juntas, el niño tiene una alta auto estima. Los niños necesitan saber primero que son amados y aceptados por quienes son. Luego, con esto como base, su impulso natural es tomar ese amor y aprender a compartirlo con el mundo de maneras constructivas. A medida que usted se afana por darle a su niño este regalo maravilloso que es la auto estima, lo más importante de comprender es esto: *la auto estima evoluciona en los niños primariamente a través de la calidad de nuestras relaciones con ellos.*
Parent and preschooler Newsletter, julio de 1994.

Debido a que la auto estima es crucial para todos los aspectos del desarrollo de un niño, este tema ha sido incluido en los artículos mencionados más arriba y otros que aparecieron en ***Parent and preschooler Newsletter.*** Este artículo resume los factores pertinentes que permiten a los padres ayudar a sus niños a verse a si mismos como personas de mérito.

Ya en 1950, Erik H. Erickson, el conocido psicólogo, presentó sus teorías sobre la naturaleza crucial de las experiencias de la niñez en proveer los bloques para construir la auto estima. Erickson vio a los seres humanos desarrollandose a través de 8 etapas en su vida desde la infancia a la vejez. Las primeras 4 etapas se concentran en lo siguiente:

- infancia — desconfianza vs. confianza básica
- $1^1/_2$ a 3 años (approx.) autonomía vs. verguenza e incertidumbre
- 3 a $5^1/_2$ años (approx.) iniciativa vs. culpabilidad
- $5^1/_2$ a 12 años (approx.) habilidad vs. inferioridad

Erickson consideró cada etapa como la base para la etapa siguiente, es decir, cuan exitosamente estaba preparado un niño en la primera etapa determinaría cuan bien completaría la próxima, y así, a través de todas las etapas que quedaban.

Confianza vs. desconfianza

Erickson consideraba que la cuestión de la confianza vs. La desconfianza era una tarea de desarrollo del primer año de vida del niño. Lo bien que sus necesidades son suplidas le dan al niño un sentido de confianza o desconfianza en si mismo y en su ambiente. En esta etapa las necesidades son principalmente fisiológicas: ser alimentado cuando tiene hambre y estar físicamente cómodo. Cuando los padres proveen un ambiente donde el niño se siente protegido de peligro, está seco y calido, y está bien alimentado, también le están ayudando a construir confianza. Los padres así proveen una importante base para muchas de las realizaciones posteriores del niño.

Pasando a otras etapas

Erickson consideraba que la confianza en sí mismo y en otros, que comienza a desarrollarse desde el nacimiento, era el elemento básico de la auto estima. La confianza es tan importante porque el niño pre escolar debe llegar a creer que el ambiente no lo castigará por desarrollar su autonomía, que es la capacidad para funcionar independientemente. El niño también debe atreverse a experimentar con cosas nuevas sin sentirse culpable si algunos de sus esfuerzos no tienen éxito.

Teorías actuales sobre la confianza

Los autores más recientes usan un lenguaje ligeramente diferente aun cuando comparten las mismas ideas. Por ejemplo, Alicia Lieberman en *The Emotional Life of the Toddler* (La vida emocional del niño), (vea Recursos), afirmó que desde la más tierna infancia el niño necesita sentir que tiene una base segura. Tal base es provista por los padres y otros proveedores de cuidado. Sostienen a los recién nacidos de manera que no se vayan a caer, y luego se mantienen cerca cuando los bebes comienzan a moverse alrededor. Cuando los

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continuará>>>>

niños aprenden a caminar, los adultos encargados de su cuidado están ahí para ver que puedan moverse sin lastimarse. *Lieberman cree que esta base segura es esencial en cada etapa de la vida del niño, de modo que pueda confiar en si mismo y en el medio ambiente.* Lieberman enfatiza que partiendo de la seguridad provista por otros, el niño puede desarrollar su propia seguridad. Lieberman llama a este sentido de seguridad "equilibrio interior." Como resultado de este equilibrio interior los niños osan intentar cosas nuevas.

Sin embargo, puede observarse que los niños varían en cuanto a la facilidad con que ellos aprenden a confiar y desarrollar este equilibrio interior — aun cuando se les provea de una base segura. Lo que sigue son dos ejemplos. Uno es un niño que tenia total confianza en su ambiente, mientras que el otro, ilustra el intento de una madre de ayudar a su joven hijo, el que no confiaba fácilmente en el ambiente para sentirse mas confiando y seguro.

Tom, un niño de tres años de edad con buen desarrollo de la confianza, fue observado en su primera visita a una playa del océano Atlántico. Apenas podía esperar para meterse en el agua. Corrió adelante de su padre hasta que el agua le llego al pecho. Allá rió y chillo mientras él y su padre jugaban.

Tim, que tenia la misma edad de Tom, era un tipo muy diferente de niño. Mientras caminaba por la arena se agarró de la mano de su madre. Dos veces trato de meterse en el agua pero saltó hacia atras cada vez que se acercó una ola. Parecía aterrorizado. Su madre le dijo, "No te apures, no tienes que meterte en el agua si no quieres." Tim murmuró que si quería. En el tercer intento lo logró, aunque todavía agarrado de su madre. Permanecieron en el agua alrededor de 10 minutos y volvieron, de la mano, a jugar en la playa. Mas tarde volvieron al agua nuevamente y esta vez entraron más lejos y se quedaron más tiempo. Al día siguiente ambos muchachos fueron vistos en el agua, con Tim todavia muy cerca de su madre.

Amar el niño por lo que el es

Otra manera en que los adultos ayudan a un niño a desarrollar auto estima es darle evidencia de que es cuidado por quien el es, y no por lo que puede hacer. Los adultos pueden ayudar a un niño a sentirse valorado evitando compararlo con otros niños. Los padres frecuentemente hacen esto con la idea de que crea un modelo o norma de comportamiento o desempeño. Frecuentemente esto resulta al revés cuando el niño interpreta el mensaje como, "Yo no soy suficientemente bueno." La madre de Tim nunca le hizo ver que el otro niño no sentia miedo del agua. Ella valoró a Tim por lo que el podía hacer, cualesquiera que fuera el tiempo que le tomara sentirse cómodo en ese nuevo ambiente.

La importancia de la comunicación

Mucha de la base que el niño usa para construir la auto estima depende de cuan bien los adultos alrededor de el se comunican. Los niños, desde la infancia, quieren hablar. Cuando gorgoritean y hacen ruidos ininteligibles, los adultos, en esta etapa, comúnmente responden haciendo ruidos del mismo modo. Mientras que más tarde los adultos pueden ignorar el parloteo de su niño en edad preescolar — aunque este también es un tipo de comunicación y debería ser escuchado.

Cada tarde la madre de Sara le preguntaba, "Cuéntame que sucedió en la pre escuela hoy." Despues de alrededor de una semana de discutir los eventos de la pre escuela Sara suspiro y dijo, "Yo no quiero hablar más de eso. Quiero contarte por que estoy enojada con Freddie." Su madre sabiamente escucho a Sara y oyó sobre los sentimientos heridos de ella y su deseo de pegarle. Así su conversación tomo una mayor profundidad que antes. Además, Sara aprendio una lección importante: que su madre no la reprendió por estar enojada o sentirse herida. Esta era parte de la lección de Sara sobre la confianza.

El amor en medio de la disciplina

Los padres y otros encargados del cuidado de los niños pueden hacer comentarios afectuosos y de apreciación al niño, en cualquier estado en que él esté. Esto es cierto hasta en medio de la disciplina. "Yo te quiero mucho, pero tengo que hacer que pares esto," ó "No me gusta lo que estas haciendo ahora mismo," son dos ejemplos sobre este aspecto.

Con una vida actual tan agitada y exigente, los padres pueden sentirse estresados y mostrar enfado con el niño. A veces ellos se sienten culpables por el enojo. Sin embargo, esta es la manera que los niños aprenden sobre el enfado, aprenden a reconocer su propio enojo, y, es de esperar, como expresarlo constructivamente. Thomas Gordon, autor de *Parent Effectiveness Training* (Capacitación de eficacia para padres), escribió sobre el uso de mensajes que incluyen el "Yo" cuando se está enojado. Por ejemplo, "Yo estoy muy enojado contigo ahora mismo," es muy diferente que decir, "Eres una niña mala." El punto es expresar el enfado sin atacar a la persona del niño con declaraciones como, "Por que no puedes hacer nada bien?" ó "Eso que hiciste fue una verdadera tontería." Cuando los padres usan expresiones de enfado constructivas los niños tienen un modelo para lidiar con su propio enfado así como también con el de otra gente.

La alabanza debería ser calida y genuina

Es asombroso cuan sensibles son los niños a la falta de sinceridad. Los adultos harían bien en pensar cuidadosamente sobre lo que genuinamente pueden alabar en el niño, mantener una lista de estas cosas, y revisar la lista frecuentemente. Verán que el número de cosas que son merecedoras de alabanza seguirá creciendo.

Varios autores en el libro, *Parental Development* (Desarrollo de los Padres), (ver Recursos), hacen recalcar el punto que los padres pueden crecer y cambiar al mismo tiempo que sus niños. El hecho que una persona esté criando un niño no garantiza que esa persona sabrá instantáneamente como ser padre.

Si los padres observan cuidadosamente los patrones de conducta de sus niños, aprenderán a como nutrirlos. Por ejemplo, aprenderán que hablándoles simplemente les ayuda a crear un mayor lenguaje y capacidad para hablar. De hecho, los padres no deben usar oraciones que son mas largas de lo que los niños pueden seguir.

Mientras los padres siguen las directivas planteadas para desarrollar la auto estima de sus niños, harían bien en prestar atención a los cambios en su propio comportamiento. De esta manera, sin duda seguirán desarrollando su propia auto estima como padres.

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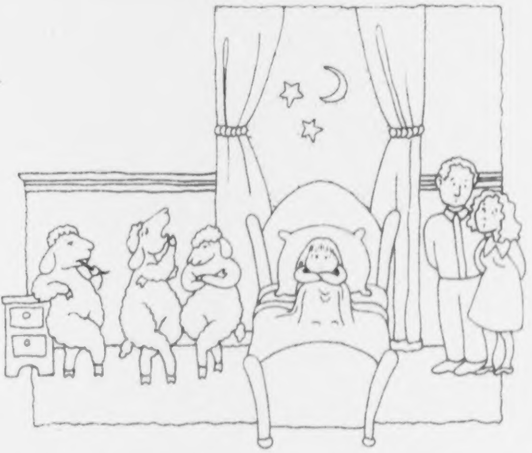
Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Volume 12, Number 1 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — January 1997

BEDTIME BLUES: *What To Do When They're Too Young To Count Sheep*



- *It's three o'clock in the morning. Mother rocks her two year old in her arms, jiggling him gently as she goes back and forth across the darkened bedroom. She walks and walks and jiggles and rocks but her child is wide awake. She is sleepy and desperate. It is three o'clock in the morning and the rest of the world sleeps. But in this small corner a tired parent walks and jiggles and wonders "isn't there something I can do?"*
- *It's 9:00 P.M. Mother carries her one year old on her hip as she attempts to ready three-year-old Adam for bed. Adam is not responding to her many pleas and admonishments to get ready for bed. Father is in the kitchen washing dishes and he is thinking "We have to get these kids to sleep tonight; I just can't be awake all night again...!"*

Have you ever been up for half the night with a wide-awake child? If you have then you know that the only thing you can think about in those hours is sleep. Although scientists still don't know why we need sleep, we do know that it certainly serves a restorative purpose for the body and the mind. Without it we feel tired, disoriented, and depressed.

We also know that children whose sleep cycles are disturbed are sleepy or poorly behaved during the day. They may have difficulty with transitions and adjustments, concentrating and focusing on tasks, and an inclination toward tantrums and accidents. Although more or better sleep is not a cure-all, children's behavior frequently improves when they get a good night's sleep.

Developmental Needs

A child's need for sleep changes with age. A newborn baby will sleep about 16 or 17 hours, although not all at one time. He will sleep almost as much during the day as during the night. By six months of age, most infants will have settled down to a continuous nighttime sleep of about eleven to twelve hours with only occasional brief wakenings, supplemented by about two hours of daytime naps. After the toddler period, napping is rare and nighttime sleep totals about ten to eleven hours. This stays fairly constant until pre-adolescence when sleep decreases to about eight or nine hours.

Some children, right from birth, seem to have no problem sleeping. They will fall asleep easily, sleep through the night and, if they awaken, go back to sleep on their own. Other children have more difficulty falling asleep and are easily disturbed by any change in their environment. A different routine, new surroundings, or visitors in the home can cause sleep problems. But a problem sleeper doesn't have to stay that way – all children can learn to sleep through the night. How parents react makes the difference.

Sleep Cycles

Much of what parents view as "abnormal" numbers of awakenings during the night is actually quite normal. All sleep is not the same. The depth of sleep varies through the night in cycles, starting with a light sleep and gradually deepening, and then growing lighter. After one or two of these sleep cycles, we enter a different kind of sleep called REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. It is during this state that we dream.

We all tend to wake up briefly after an episode of dreaming. If all seems well, we return to sleep and rarely remember waking. If something seems amiss, we wake up to investigate further. Sometimes young children fail to return to sleep quickly after these normal arousals because something seems "wrong" to them. They may have gone to sleep in their parents' arms and now they are in their crib, or alone in their bed. The conditions under which they went to sleep have changed during the night.

When we treat these wakings by immediately going into our children's bedrooms, rocking them, or otherwise helping them get back to sleep, we create a situation which they cannot duplicate without us. They will then associate going to sleep with having a parent help them get to sleep, and that creates the problem.

Sleep Patterns

Good sleep patterns in children come from establishing good bedtime routines and good sleep associations. First let's look at what we mean by sleep associations and bedtime routines.

Everyone associates falling asleep with certain conditions. Children associate sleep with a certain room, being in a specific bed or crib, hugging a special stuffed animal. When a child wakes, sees that everything is the same as it was when he fell asleep, he easily returns to sleep. If, however, he has become used to a sleep condition that changes after he falls asleep, such as a parent who leaves the room, then when he awakens during the night the sleep conditions have changed. Now he sees that the parent is no longer there, and he is unable to return to sleep until the parent is once again present.

How can I help my child develop good bedtime routines and sleep associations?

Carl is two years old. Both parents work outside of the home. Evenings can sometimes be chaotic and Carl often falls asleep in front of the television set while one of his parents is doing chores in the room. Mom or Dad then carries him to his crib. When Carl awakens during the night, he is unable to return to sleep easily and, most nights, one of his parents must help him get back to sleep once or twice during the night. His sleep associations depend on activity, noise, and his parents' presence.

Janice is also a two year old. Her parents also work outside of the home but there is a difference. After dinner, Janice and her Mom play quietly together while Dad does the dishes. Her Dad then joins them and Mom gets a chance to do a few chores in the home. Around 7:00 P.M. Mom or Dad gives Janice her bath and helps her brush her teeth. She is then allowed to choose which of her stuffed animals will sleep with her that night. Her parents walk with her to her room and tuck her in. After good-night kisses, her parents turn off the light and turn on the night light. Leaving the door ajar, they leave the room and Janice, holding her stuffed toy, falls asleep.

Janice's parents help her to get ready for bed and allow her to go to sleep on her own. Janice's sleep associations are established by Janice and she falls asleep on her own should she wake during the night.

So let's talk about ways in which we can help our child.

- Establish a relaxing bedtime ritual. These are the things that a family does that lead up to bedtime. Things like brushing teeth, hearing a story, saying prayers, kissing family members goodnight, and deciding on which stuffed animal will come to bed that night all constitute bedtime routines.
- A child needs to be able to help himself fall asleep on his own. Parents should be sure that their child develops sleep associations that he can re-establish for himself if he awakens during the night.
- Instead of holding your child, or lying next to her until she falls asleep, help your child find a "transitional object" such as a special toy, blanket, or stuffed animal. This will help her accept nighttime separation from you and will help her comfort herself when she is alone. Without being too rigid, it is probably a good idea to make the "transitional object" something different each evening so that your child doesn't become dependent on one specific object that will render her unable to fall asleep if it is missing.
- Let your child have a night light if it reassures him. There is nothing to be gained from forcing a child to sleep in complete darkness. Many children find a night light comforting. It is also all right to leave the child's door open so that he feels less isolated and alone.
- If patterns that don't work have already been established, it is important for parents to gradually change their methods in a slow and reassuring way. For example, if a child has

Nighttime fears - *How can I get rid of the "monsters" and nightmares?*

Amy was afraid of "monsters". Her mom and dad spent large, extended periods of time, "searching" Amy's room but this did little to ease Amy's fears. Parents need to realize that, although the "monsters" are not real, the fears are. Rather than extended "searches" parents should simply reassure their child, that they are safe and that you will take care of them.

All children have nightmares now and then. They may be caused by things that happen to your child during the day, anxiety, new experiences or feelings. Children also talk about bad dreams when they really mean that they have bad feelings or fears. Parents need to talk about feelings and fears with their children.

Remember that a younger child needs physical comforting such as a hug or a gentle backrub. An older child needs reassuring words and the sense that you understand and are there to help if help is needed.

Make sure that all of the same sleep associations are present. These details may seem small and unimportant but they are the things that make the "monsters" go away and help our children to feel safe and comfortable.

become used to being held while he falls asleep, a parent might want to hold him for shorter and shorter periods of time, perhaps stroking his back instead, reducing the length of time until he learns to fall asleep on his own.

Other Concerns and Issues

Remember that thunderstorms, ear aches, and bouts of loneliness frequently bring children into their parents' bed. Parents need to decide if having their child sleep with them is the best solution, or if they would rather encourage him to sleep on his own. Most children don't have serious ongoing problems with sleeping alone.

Many children engage in some kind of repetitious behavior at bedtime, after waking at night, or in the morning. Young children occasionally rock back and forth. Other rhythmic behaviors, particularly head banging and head rolling, most often occur at bedtimes or after waking from sleep. A child rocking back and forth or rolling his head may simply be providing himself with a feeling of pleasure and comfort.

When these behaviors begin after 18 months of age and persist in an older child, they may have significance and be related to emotional factors. Talk to your pediatrician about your concerns.

Parents also need to know that there are other influences that can affect their child's sleep. If a child is taking medication of any kind, it is possible that this medication may cause sleep disturbance. Be sure to consult with your pediatrician if you notice this happening.

So there we have it. Help your child develop a calming and comforting nighttime routine, and sleep associations he can establish on his own. By understanding your child's needs and responding sensitively, we demonstrate to him that he has been born into an orderly and caring world. It is possible to have children who sleep. Who needs to count sheep anyway?

***Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour** is a freelance writer and staffer at "**Parent and preschooler Newsletter**". Information in this article was adapted from "Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems" by Richard Ferber, MD; "Sleep Problems in Children" by the American Academy of Pediatrics; and other sources.*

In Upcoming Issues:

- **✦ Sibling Rivalry**
- **✦ Parent/Teacher Conferences**
- **✦ Red-Flag Behaviors**
- **✦ The Doctors' Corner**

This newsletter is available in English Language and English/Spanish Language Editions

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN PLUS

What kitchen sounds does your preschooler hear when he falls asleep? Some sounds might be the clatter of clearing the table, the splash of washing pots, the whir of the dishwasher.

With our first child, I did some tiptoeing, afraid to wake her up. But I did not adhere to such limitations with our second. I set her white wicker bassinet near the kitchen/laundry area in the afternoon. During her nap time she was near me while I cooked supper and continued with household chores. Now, at age nine, she often asks for the comfort of hearing us in the house as she drifts off to sleep. Our older daughter is more sensitive to noise.

Both of our daughters had bedtime routines when they were preschool age. They had their bath, a bedtime snack, brushed their teeth, read two books, sang one song, requested a drink of water, and had a goodnight kiss. "Good night, sleep tight, sweet dreams!" was our last call before leaving the room.

Preschoolers need good food in small doses and you can include a bedtime snack as part of their evening routine.

One simple idea for a bedtime snack that is easy to prepare and is good for just about every age child is a bagel. I have heard that bagels are good teethers because of their dense, chewy texture. The round shape and convenient hole also makes them easy to grab and hold. Bagels are tasty and filling.

An adult should cut the bagel, but your preschooler can help spread the topping. Serve bagels toasted or untoasted. Serve milk, juice, or water in a 6 to 8 oz. cup.

Here are some bagel toppers:

- butter or margarine
- jam or fruit spread
- cream cheese
- sliced cheese
- thinly sliced or mashed banana
- cinnamon/sugar
- peanut butter

If bagels are not available, toast is a good substitute.

Incorporate teaching time into your bedtime routines. Here is a good idea to start you off:

- **I Spy**: A good quiet time game to play with your preschooler before he goes to bed is 'I Spy'. You start by looking around the room and saying, for example, "I spy something red", or "I spy something furry" if your preschooler knows these words. Then your preschooler will guess the pillow in its red pillow case, or the cat. After she has guessed, it is her turn to spy something and your turn to guess. After two or three unsuccessful guesses, "I give up" can be called, and the object must be revealed. Don't pick things which will be difficult for your preschooler to *spy*.

☺ Enjoy your child's bedtime!

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DEAR READER

Welcome to the January, 1997 issue of **Parent & preschooler Newsletter**! As you can see, there have been a few changes in **Parent & preschooler**. Not too many, we know a good thing when we see it. But there is a new publisher, The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute, and some new editorial staff.

I'm the new editor. I have been writing about parenting and children for over a decade – you may even have seen my name on previous **Parent & preschooler** features. Although my son is past his preschool years, I clearly remember those exciting and challenging days. In addition to my time in the parenting trenches, I have a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology.

The other changes involve expanding the content of the newsletter. Upcoming months will feature The Doctor's Corner where you'll find answers to questions about your children's health.

Preschooler in the Kitchen is becoming Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS. Amy Houts will be sharing not only recipes and cooking fun, but also parent-child projects.

We hope you'll join us on the ride of a lifetime as we grow our babies into young children. There's never a dull moment in raising children, or in **Parent & preschooler**.

Neala Schwartzberg

Editor

LIBRARY RESOURCES

For Adults

🕮 ***Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems*** by Richard Ferber, M.D. A Fireside Book published by Simon & Schuster, 1985.

In addition to very useful information on bedtime rituals and sleep associations, Dr. Ferber also offers practical advice and suggestions on sleep rhythm disturbances, sleeptalking and walking, as well as other sleep issues and problems.

🕮 ***Keys to Children's Sleep Problems*** by Susan E. Gottlieb, M.D., published by Barron; Woodbury, New York; as part of their series Barron's Parenting Keys, 1993.

Dr. Gottlieb takes a developmental view of sleep, describing key features at different ages. She also provides ideas and suggestions for appropriate bedtime activities and covers several sleep-related issues.

• ***Taming Your Child's Bad Dream Monsters*** by Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D. (audio tape) Achievement, Inc.; Garden City, NY. This tape provides a variety of helpful techniques for parents to use with children experiencing frequent bad dreams and nightmares.

For Children

🕮 ***Guess How Much I Love You*** by Sam McBratney, illustrated by Anita Jeram, published by Candlewick Press, 1994. The small, sturdy board book tells the story of Little Nutbrown Hare who was going to bed. But first he had to make sure he told Big Nutbrown Hare how much he loved him.

🕮 ***Go To Bed, Fred*** by Allison Inches, Illustrated by Lauren Atinello. Puppet by Rollie Krewson. Workman Publishing and Jim Henson Productions. Young Fred is going to bed, and helping all of his friends too. "Take off your socks, Mr. Fox. Give me a hug, Ladybug!" A charming book that comes with an adorable Muppet™ puppet. (Parents: Check the puppet for safety for young children)

🕮 ***Rock-a-Bye Farm*** by Diane Johnston Hamm, illustrated by Rick Brown, published by Simon & Schuster, 1992.

It is bedtime and the Farmer is rocking his baby, and then all his animals to sleep... from the tiny mouse to the very large horse.

🕮 ***Why Do Grown-ups Have All the Fun?***, by Marisabina Russo, published by Greenwillow Books, 1987. It's time for bed, but Hannah can't sleep. She's convinced that while she's in bed her parents are having all the fun. Finally she sits next to her parents as her mother writes a letter and her father does the crossword puzzle. Convinced her parents aren't eating ice cream and playing with toys, Hannah goes to sleep.

🕮 ***Sleep Tight*** by B.G. Hennessy, illustrated by Anthony Carnabuci, published by Puffin Books, 1995.

A gentle rhyming book with luminous illustrations makes this a soothing and wonderful read-aloud bedtime book.

🕮 ***Put Me to Bed!*** by Nicola Smee, published by Puffin Books, 1996.

Molly's toys are going to bed, each in their own special place. With four cut-out toys, young readers help Molly tuck Giraffe, Pig, Bear, and Dolly into bed.

🕮 ***The Night The Moon Blew Kisses*** by Lynn Manuel; Illustrated by Robin Spowart; Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996.

This magical book is the story of an enchanted night when a grandmother and her granddaughter share a walk in the moonlight. This book is a lovely depiction of the special ways in which children can relate to nature and of the values of intergenerational relationships.

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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365 A Monthly Newsletter
For a one, two, or three year subscription send check, money order, purchase order or credit card number to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
US$12 – One Year
US$24 – Two Years
US$36 – Three Years
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de January, edición de 1997 (volumen 12 , número 1) de Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés al Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center, 480 Old Westbury Road, Roslyn Heights, New York 11577-2215 ó llame al 1-800-595-9365.

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PROBLEMAS PARA DORMIR: Que hacer cuando los niños son demasiado jóvenes para contar ovejas

- Son las tres de la mañana. La madre mece suavemente a su bebe de dos años de edad en sus brazos mientras va y vuelve por el cuarto que está a oscuras. Camina y camina y mece a su niño pero este sigue completamente despierto. Ella tiene sueño y se desespera. Son las tres de la mañana y el resto del mundo duerme. Pero en este pequeño rincón una cansada madre camina y mece y se pregunta "No hay algo que pueda hacer"?
- Son las 9:00 P.M. La madre lleva a su niño de un año de edad sobre su cadera mientras intenta preparar a Adam, su niño de tres años, para la cama. Adam no responde a sus argumentos y amonestaciones para prepararse para la cama. El padre está en la cocina lavando los platos y piensa "Tenemos que conseguir que estos niños duerman esta noche; sinceramente no puedo quedarme despierto toda la noche de nuevo. . . ! "

Ha estado alguna vez despierta la mitad de la noche con un niño que está totalmente despierto? Si es así, entonces usted sabe que la única cosa en la que uno puede pensar a esas horas es en dormir. Y, aunque los científicos todavía no saben por que necesitamos dormir, sabemos que sirve un proposito restaurador para el cuerpo y la mente. Sin dormir nos sentiríamos cansados, desorientados, y deprimimos.

También sabemos que a los niños cuyos ciclos de sueño están perturbados les da sueño o se portan mal durante el día. Además, pueden tener dificultad con las transiciones y ajustes, con concentrarse y enfocarse en tareas, y pueden tener una inclinación a berrinches y accidentes. Aunque dormir más o mejor no es un cura para todo, el comportamiento de los niños frecuentemente mejora cuando duermen bien.

Necesidades del desarrollo

La necesidad de dormir de un niño cambia con la edad. Un bebe recién nacido dormirá alrededor de 16 o 17 horas, aunque no todo de una vez. Dormirá casi tanto durante el día como durante la noche. A los seis meses de edad, la mayoría de los infantes se habrán acostumbrado a dormir de noche alrededor de once a doce horas continuas con solo breves despertadas ocasionales, complementadas por cerca de dos horas de siestas diurnas. Después del período de la infancia temprana, las siestas son raras y el sueño nocturno alcanza a alrededor de diez a once horas. Esto permanece bastante constante hasta la pre-adolescencia cuando el sueño disminuye a alrededor de ocho o nueve horas.

Algunos niños, desde el mismo nacimiento, parecen no tener problemas para dormir. Se quedan dormidos fácilmente, duermen toda la noche, y si se despiertan, se vuelven a dormir por si mismos. Otros niños tienen mas dificultad para quedarse dormidos y son fácilmente perturbados por cualquier cambio en su ambiente, por rutinas diferentes, por nuevos entornos, o por visitas que pueden ocasionar problemas para dormir. Pero un niño con problemas para dormir no tiene que permanecer así -- todos los niños pueden aprender a dormir toda la noche. La diferencia la hace la reacción de los padres.

Ciclos del sueño

Mucho de lo que los padres consideran como un numero "anormal" de despertadas durante la noche son realmente bastante normales. Todas las maneras de dormir no son iguales. La profundidad del sueño varia a lo largo de la noche en ciclos, comenzando con un sueño liviano que se profundiza gradualmente, para luego alivianarse nuevamente. Después de uno o dos de estos ciclos, entramos en un tipo diferente de sueño llamado MRO (Movimiento Rápido de Ojos). Es durante este estado que soñamos.

Todos tendemos a despertamos brevemente después de un episodio de sueños. Si todo parece estar bien, volvemos a dormir y rara vez recordamos haber despertado. Si algo parece no estar bien, nos despertamos para investigar más. A veces los niños más pequeños no pueden volver a dormirse rápidamente después de estos despertares normales porque algo les parece que anda "mal". Puede que se hayan dormido en brazos de su padre y ahora están solos en su cuna o cama. Las condiciones bajo las cuales de fueron a dormir pueden haber cambiado durante la noche.

Cuando reaccionamos ante estos despertares llendo inmediatamente a los ormitorios de los niños, meciéndolos, o ayudándoles de cualquier manera a volverse a dormir, estamos creando una situación que ellos no pueden duplicar sin nosotros. Entonces, ellos asociaran el irse a dormir con el tener un padre que los ayuda a quedarse dormidos cuando se despiertan, y eso crea el problema.

Patrones de sueño

Los buenos patrones de sueño en los niños provienen del haber establecido buenas rutinas a la hora de irse a la cama y buenas asociaciones con la idea de dormir. Primero veamos que queremos decir con asociaciones con la idea de dormir y con rutinas a la hora de irse a la cama.

Todos asocian el irse a dormir con ciertas condiciones físicas. Los niños asocian el dormir con un cierto cuarto, con una cuna o cama específica, con abrazar un animal relleno especial. Cuando un niño [illegible] despierta, y ve que todo está igual que cuando se fue a dormir fácilmente se volverá a dormir.

Sin embargo, si se ha acostumbrado a una rutina para dormirse que cambia después de que se ha quedado dormido, tal como un padre que se va del cuarto, entonces, cuando se despierta durante la noche, las condiciones que necesita para dormir han cambiado. Ahora ve que el padre ya no está, y es incapaz devolver a dormirse por si mismo hasta que el padre este presente nuevamente.

Como puedo ayudar a que mi niño desarrolle buenas rutinas para acostarse y buenas asociaciones con la idea de dormir?

Carlos tiene dos años de edad. Sus dos padres trabajan fuera del hogar. Por lo tanto, las tardes en su casa pueden ser a veces caóticas y Carlos frecuentemente se queda dormido frente a la televisión, mientras uno de sus padres trabaja en la sala. La mamá o el papá lo llevan entonces a su cuna. Cuando Carlos despierta durante la noche, es incapaz de volver a dormirse fácilmente y, la mayoria de las noches, uno de sus padres tiene que ayudarlo a volverse dormir. Esto sucede una o dos veces durante la noche. Sus asociaciones con la idea de quedarse dormido dependen de actividad, ruido, y de la presencia de suspadres.

Janice también tiene dos años. Sus padres también trabajan fuera de la casa pero hay una diferencia. Después de la cena, Janice y su madre juegan juntas sosegadamente mientras su padre lava los platos. Cuando termina, su padre entonces se reúne con ellas y mamá tiene oportunidad de hacer algunas cosas en la casa. Alrededor de las 7:00 PM., mamá o papá le dan a Janice su baño y le ayudan a cepillarse los dientes. Entonces se le deja que escoja con cual de sus animales rellenos dormirá esa noche. Sus padres van con ella a su pieza, la meten en su cama y la tapan. Después de un beso de buenas noches, sus padres apagan la luz y encienden la luz de noche. Luego, dejando la puerta entreabierta, salen de la pieza y Janice, abrazando su juguete relleno, se quedará dormida.

Los padres de Janice la ayudan a alistarse para la cama y le permiten dormirse sola. Las asociaciones con la idea de quedarse dormida de Janice son establecidas por Janice, y ella se dormiría por si misma si se despertara durante la noche.

Hablemos entonces sobre las maneras en que podemos ayudar a nuestros niños.

* Establezca un ritual tranquilizador para la hora de acostarse. Estas son las cosas que una familia hace antes de acostarse. Cosas como cepillarse los dientes, oír un cuento, orar, dar un beso de buenas noches a los miembros de la familia, y decidir con que animal relleno dormir esa noche, constituyen rutinas para la hora de irse a dormir.

* Un niño necesita poder ayudarse a si mismo para quedarse dormido por si mismo. Los padres deberían asegurarse de que su niño desarrolle asociaciones con la idea de dormirse que el puede restablecer por si mismo, si se despertara durante la noche.

* En vez de mecer a su niño, o acostarse junto a el/ella hasta que se quede dormida, ayude a su niño a encontrar un "objeto transitorio" tal como un juguete especial, una frazada, o un animal relleno. Esto lo ayudará a aceptar la separación de usted en la noche y lo ayudará a reconfortarse a si mismo cuando se encuentre solo. Sin ser demasiado rígido, probablemente es una buena idea hacer que el "objeto transitorio" sea algo diferente cada noche de manera que su niño no llegue a ser dependiente de un objeto específico que la hará incapaz de dormirse si este le falta.

* Deje que su niño tenga una luz de noche si esto lo tranquiliza. Nada se gana con forzar a un niño a dormir en completa obscuridad. Muchos niños encuentran reconfortante el tener una luz de noche. También está bien dejar abierta la puerta del cuarto del niño de modo que el se sienta menos aislado y solo.

* Si ya se han establecido patrones que no funcionan, es importante que los padres cambien gradualmente sus métodos en forma lenta y tranquilizadora. Por ejemplo, si un niño ha llegado a acostumbrarse a ser tomado en brazos mientras se duerme, un padre podría querer tenerlo en brazos por periodos de tiempo cada vez mas cortos, quizás acariciando su espalda en vez de tomarlo, reduciendo el tiempo cada vez hasta que aprenda a quedarse dormido por si mismo.

Otros temas y preocupaciones

Recuerde que las tormentas de truenos, los dolores de oídos, y los ataques de soledad frecuentemente traen a los niños al lecho de sus padres. Los padres necesitan decidir si dormir con ellos es la mejor solución, o si ellos más bien le fomentaran el dormir solo. La mayoria de los niños no tienen problemas serios recurrentes con dormir solos.

Muchos niños se involucran en algún tipo de comportamiento repetitivo a la hora de dormirse, después de despertarse durante la noche, o en la mañana. Los niños pequeños ocasionalmente se mecen de aquí para allá. Otros comportamientos rítmicos, particularmente pegarse en la cabeza y girar la cabeza de un lado al otro, frecuentemente ocurren a la hora de acostarse o después de despertarse debido a sueños. Un niño que se mece de aquí para allá o mueve su cabeza puede simplemente estar ándose a si mismo una sensación de placer y comodidad.

Cuando estos comportamientos comienzan después de los 18 meses de edad y persisten en un niño de mayor edad, estos comportamientos pueden tener importancia y estar relacionados con factores emocionales. Hable con su pediatra sobre sus reocupaciones.

Los padres también necesitan saber que hay otras influencias que pueden afectar el sueño de su niño. Si un niño esta tomando medicinas de cualquier tipo, es posible que estas puedan ocasionar una perturbación del sueño. Asegúrese de consultar con su pediatra si observa que esto ocurre.

Pues ahí está, ayude a su niño a desarrollar una rutina nocturna calmada y reconfortante, y el podrá establecer sus propias asociaciones positivas con la idea de dormir. Al comprender las necesidades de su niño y al responder sensiblemente, le demostramos que ha nacido en un mundo ordenado y cuidadoso. Es posible tener niños que duerman bien. A quien le interesa contar ovejas de todos modos?

Los miedos nocturnos - Como puedo librarme de "monstruos" y de pesadillas?

Amy tenia miedo a los "monstruos". Su mama y papa pasaban extensos periodos de tiempo, "buscando" en la pieza de Amy, pero esto no ayudó mucho a mitigar los miedos de Amy. Los padres necesitan darse cuenta que, aunque los "monstruos" no son verdaderos, los miedos lo son. Más bien que involucrarse en extensas "búsquedas" de monstruos, deberían simplemente asegurarle a su niño que están seguros y que usted cuidara de ellos.

Todo los niños tienen pesadillas de vez en cuando. Pueden ser ocasionadas por cosas que le han sucedido durante el día; por ansiedades, por nuevos sentimientos o experiencias. Los niños también hablan de tener malos sueños cuando realmente quieren decir que tienen miedos o malos sentimientos. Los padres necesitan hablar sobre estos sentimientos y miedos con sus niños.

Recuerde que un niño pequeño necesita ser reconfortado físicamente, como con un abrazo o un masaje suave en la espalda. Un niño de más edad necesita palabras tranquilizantes y tener la sensación que usted comprende y que estará ahí para ayudarlo si él necesita ayuda.

Asegúrese que todas las asociaciones que tienen con el quedarse dormidos estén presentes. Estos detalles pueden parecer pequeños e insignificantes pero son las cosas que hacen que los "monstruos" desaparezcan y ayudan a nuestros niños a sentirse seguros y cómodos.

Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour es una escritora independiente y parte del personal de "Parent & Preschooler Newsletter". La información de este artículo fue adaptada de "Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems" (Resuelva los problemas para dormir de su niño" por Richard Ferber M.D., "Sleep Problems in Children" (Problemas para dormir en los niños) por la "American Academy of Pediatrics" (Academia Americana de Pediatría) y otras fuentes.

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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

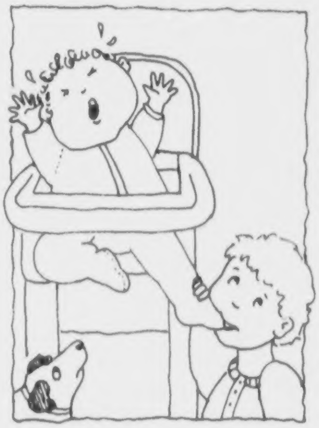
Volume 12, Number 2 | *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* | February 1997

WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE: *Understanding and Reducing Sibling Rivalry*

Three-year-old Connor has just grabbed a toy away from his one-year-old sister, Carly, and pushed her to the floor. As their mother rushes over to comfort the crying Carly, she turns to the observer and explains, "Connor really loves his little sister -it's just that sometimes he doesn't seem to know his own strength!"

One of the greatest sources of stress for families with closely-spaced children is also one of society's best-kept secrets. Harsh feelings and aggressive actions between the kids are quite common and often enduring. However, the topic of sibling rivalry is rarely discussed openly and honestly. Consequently, many parents are tormented not only by constant onfrontations between their offspring, but also by the hame that accompanies the mistaken impression that hey are alone in their suffering.

The fact is that the overwhelming majority of families with children spaced less than three years apart are plagued by consistent unpleasantness of this sort. Of course, raising an only child isn't always easy, and it certainly is true that brothers and sisters spaced four or five years apart can have problems too. But the special interpersonal dynamics created when siblings are closely-spaced routinely make the situations extraordinarily challenging.



Why did you bite your sister's toe?
I thought it was a hamburger
oh Puhlease

Understanding the Dynamics

When a young child is introduced to a competitor for the attention and affection of his parents, it is perfectly normal for him to resent the intrusion. In fact, if he accepted his new sibling without reservation, one might worry that he had not been receiving the kind of prompt, personal nurturing that is extremely important during the early years and now would be at risk. If the child is less than three when his new sibling arrives, his jealousy and hostility are especially strong for two reasons. First, he has a lot to lose; and second, he has limited intellectual skills to help him deal with whatever losses are incurred.

During the first two or three years, a child's world is centered on his home environment, and his emotional energy is focused on establishing his relationship with his primary caretakers. A four- or five-year-old, on the other hand, has typically completed the basic attachment process; and he ordinarily has entered regular out-of-home activities such as nursery school. His social interests have expanded to include peers and other adults. In other words, never again will a child's relationship with his parents be more intimate and intense as it is during infancy and toddlerhood.

Furthermore, during the early years, emotional messages are received and understood in very fundamental ways. Verbal assurances have little significance, and abstract concepts such as love and sharing have no meaning at all. Only direct physical interactions have real power; and since a young child's attention span and memory are quite short, the quality of such interactions cannot compensate for a lack of quantity. An older child may be able to figure out and eventually feel comfortable with the notion that the addition of a sibling does not diminish -- and might even enhance -- his family standing. But an infant or toddler simply is not equipped with the mental tools that would permit this to take place without a fair amount of pain.

Preparing for the Reaction

The older child's reaction when the baby is first brought home is relatively mild. After all, the baby spends most of her time sleeping and does not constitute much of a threat. As the weeks go by,

Continued

however, the child starts to sense he is losing some parental attention to his sibling, and he may try to win it back by imitating the new object of their affections. As a result, insisting on being carried, abandoning achievements in toilet training, and other regressions to "baby behavior" can be expected.

A few months later when the baby begins crawling, walking, and talking, the situation deteriorates rapidly. Now the baby demands enormous amounts of parental attention; and her many accomplishments bring constant expressions of affection from the parents. This raises the stakes to an intolerable level for her brother, who now senses that his sister is actively stealing his parents from him. So he lashes out at her by hitting, pushing, pinching, grabbing toys away, etc. He then discovers that these attempts to regain first place in the hearts of his parents merely bring reprimands from them. Consequently, his loathing for his sibling grows enormously, and his once cheerful outlook on life sours considerably.

Meanwhile, the baby is being introduced to a different world than the one her brother experienced during his early years. Whereas he had nothing but nurturing from friendly adults, she is being subjected to brotherly aggression on a regular basis. As a result, she learns survival skills, such as crying after the appearance of her sibling but before he actually has a chance to attack. The unjust chastisement he subsequently receives from the unsuspecting parents makes the older child temporarily wary, while the younger one starts to realize she has the capacity for retaliation. Soon, she begins to turn the tables on her brother and often becomes the aggressor in their confrontations.

At this point, most parents find their frustration and sense of failure to be overwhelming. To their dismay, they discover themselves saying the words they swore they would never utter, "I don't care who started it – you're both getting punished!" And you can imagine what happens when a third sibling is added to this stage in the game...

Reducing the Difficulties

What can be done? The obvious solution is to space your kids at least three years apart; but this is not always possible or desirable for a variety of reasons. So if you find yourself with two or more closely-spaced children, don't panic or despair; but do be prepared for the possibility of ill-feelings arising among your offspring. Also don't fool yourself into believing that reading the older child relevant stories, including him in special discussions, taking him to see the maternity ward, etc. will make much of a difference. If he is over three, such activities are not necessary; and if he is under three, they simply won't have much impact.

Fortunately, there are some effective strategies you can employ. They probably won't prevent the eruption of sibling rivalry entirely, but they should help to keep it to a manageable level and allow your children to get past the initial unpleasantness and eventually develop some genuine fondness for one another.

◆ Don't let the older child hurt the baby.

This may seem like obvious advice, but every year an alarming number of young children do serious damage to their little siblings. They don't know their own strength, nor do they have a true conception of the consequences of their actions, so it is possible for the baby to suffer severe "accidents" at the hands of her brother or sister. Therefore, vigilance in supervision is critical. While it is important to recognize that the older child's bullying is normal, it is equally imperative he understand it will not be allowed. Respect for his feelings in this situation should never be translated into tolerance for his aggression.

◆ Don't fuss over the baby in front of the older child.

This may be considered common sense, but only if you are alert enough to recognize the potential for emotional distress in your older child. Unfortunately, many parents are so overcome with delight over the baby they often forget how hurtful their exuberance may be to their first-born. Most parents quickly learn to control themselves in this regard; but it is common to see crestfallen faces on little ones who after having been the star of the show for a year or two now have to sit on the sidelines virtually ignored as visiting relatives and friends rush by and fight for a chance to lavish adoration on the new arrival.

◆ Don't criticize the older child for regression.

As noted earlier, a child can be expected to return to various "baby behaviors" after the arrival of a new sibling. While this may be alarming and irritating, it also should be quite temporary as long as you don't overreact. Punishing him for doing things that don't bother you – and sometimes even bring you delight – when they are done by his little sibling will only increase his confusion. Try to treat such episodes as casually as possible, and make an extra effort to praise and reward

Continued

all instances of age appropriate behavior. Remember, he views the baby as a formidable foe in the battle for your approval. Therefore, discouraging him from acting "like her" may be counterproductive, whereas emphasizing the advantages of acting "like one of us" should work like a charm.

◆ Give the older child at least a half-hour of undivided attention every day.

It is critical to talk to a young child in a language he truly understands. Many parents make the mistake of repeatedly trying to reassure their first-born by telling him he is cherished just as much as before the baby's arrival. But this won't work unless the words are backed up by something that has real meaning for him; and in his mind, attention equals love. Therefore, it is a good idea to set aside a regular, daily period during which you and he do something special together. It can be a storybook session, an arts-and-crafts activity, or whatever. But the two of you must be alone – reading to him while rocking the baby on your lap doesn't count.

◆ Be ready for the baby to start turning the tables.

At first, it is reasonable to assume that the older child will be at fault for all confrontations; and for a while, such an assumption will be largely accurate. However, after a few months, he often may be an innocent bystander as the baby begins crying just because he has made an appearance. And later, he frequently may become a victim as the younger one starts learning aggressive behaviors too. Many parents fail to pick up on these critical changes until after the older child has been unjustly chastised on numerous occasions. Each time he is unfairly punished, his resentment deepens; while the younger one becomes increasingly emboldened each time her own aggression goes unchecked.

◆ Keep your cool.

Remember that the rivalry is over you. After a while, your children will begin to see the benefits of being friends, and will reserve their most flagrant confrontations for those times when you are there to witness the unpleasantness. As long as you do not give them the satisfaction they are seeking by getting upset, taking sides, chastising too strongly, etc. they soon will realize the futility of these fierce skirmishes and will seek to "get a rise out of you" in a more appropriate manner.

Michael K. Meyerhoff, Ed.D., a former researcher with the Harvard Preschool Project, is the executive director of The Epicenter Inc., "The Education for Parenthood Information Center," a family advisory and advocacy agency located in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts.

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PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN PLUS

Valentine's Day Friends

"Do you have a friend?" I asked each of my preschool students. "What is his/her name?" I was surprised by some of their answers. Having a friend is a very personal preference. Just as adults like certain people, so do children.

When I see young children playing together with a friend, they smile and laugh. I can see a feeling of camaraderie, of "we're in this together", a singleness of purpose. Whether children are intent on building a cardboard block house, or dressing up in the housekeeping corner, friends help each other as they play.

Valentine's Day is the holiday to tell friends how special they are to you. You can foster young children's friendships by mixing up this heart-shaped, cherry chocolate cake for your family, your children's friends, or class. Try the following game at a party, or next time you have a group of your child's friends over.

Cherry Chocolate Cake

This is a quick and easy cake that is both festive and delicious! Use heart shaped cake pans if possible.

1 box chocolate cake mix
21 oz. can cherry pie filling
2 eggs

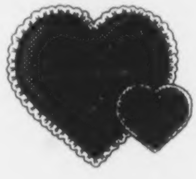
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9-inch square pan and a 9-inch round cake pan. Mix ingredients in a large bowl. If you mix by hand, count 300 strokes, or use an electric mixer for two minutes on high speed. Bake about 30 minutes or until a tooth pick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool 10 minutes then turn out of pans. Cut the round cake in half and place the cut sides on the adjacent two sides of the square cake to form a heart. Frost with pink frosting or make a sugar-snowflake by dusting confectioners sugar over a lacy doily. Lift the doily to reveal the delicate design.

Heart-Warming Musical Chairs

This is a non-competitive musical chairs game.

Preparation: Place as many chairs as the number of children in two rows, back to back, in the center of a room. For Valentine's Day cut out pairs of different colored hearts, for example, two pink, two red, two blue, etc. At other times of the year you can use different shapes and colors, for example, two red squares, two blue circles, etc. Tape a heart to each one of the chairs. If you have an odd number of children, make a third heart of one of the colors. Have music nearby.

Directions: Turn on the music. Children walk around the chairs while the music plays. Stop the music; everyone sits down on the chair nearest to them. Then help the children find their match; the person with the matching color heart (or other shape). In this version of musical chairs, keep the same number of chairs throughout the game (don't take one away each time as in traditional musical chairs).



DEAR READER

Sibling rivalry is one of parenting's greatest challenges. In this month's issue, Dr. Michael Meyerhoff talks about sibling rivalry and offers insights and suggestions which will help parents guide their youngsters.

We are also delighted to introduce our new column, The Doctor's Corner. Our first contributor is Dr. Ronald Marino who helps parents know when to call the doctor. In future issues we hope to discuss the topics and questions you send in to us. So please keep those letters coming! We always love hearing from our readers.

And don't forget to check out Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS with a wonderful new twist on musical chairs. With this game all our children are winners!

Neala Schwartzberg

Editor

☎ Children's Dental Health Hotline: Thursday, Feb. 20 and Friday, Feb. 21.

Dial **1-888-GO-TEETH (468-3384)**, a toll free number. It's a public service by the Chicago Dental Society, staffed with dentists ready to answer questions regarding dental care for children.

From thumbsucking, to baby bottle tooth decay, to how to handle the legend of the tooth fairy; these professionals will answer questions from all over the country. Pamphlets describing dental procedures will be available. Callers who request referrals will be sent the names, addresses, and phone numbers of dentists near their home or place of work.

THE DOCTOR'S CORNER

When to Contact Your Pediatrician

Check-ups and shots are the foundations of child health care, but the medical community can also enhance a child's health in other ways.

Every child deserves a *medical home*, where the doctors get to know you and your child. Your child's medical home should provide primary care and coordinate all other specialty and emergency services. Frequently changing from doctor to doctor can undermine the doctor-patient relationship and compromise the quality of care that your child receives. Therefore, carefully select a medical home for your child and obtain all of your child's health care services from these doctors.

Your doctor is also a valuable resource in guiding you through dilemmas in child rearing, illness care, and available community services. Begin to think of your pediatricians as the professional members of your extended family. Most physicians are happy to speak with you over the telephone regarding any child health-related issue. Your challenge is to decide when and about what to call your doctors.

Calls During Office Hours

Outside of an immediate serious medical problem, even if you call during office hours, you will probably have to leave a message and the doctor will call you back.

Call during office hours with any of the following:

- Questions about child rearing and development
- If you think your child might need to be seen for an illness
- Guidance about the significance of your child's symptoms and recommendations for home care
- If your child was seen in an emergency room or by another physician
- General medical information relevant to your child
- Vitamin and prescription advice and refills
- Referrals to other medical and health care providers
- Billing questions

In some offices many of the above are managed by a nurse, physician assistant, or other professional. If you feel that your question can only be handled by the doctor, it is important to tell the receptionist.

Calls After Office Hours

If you decide to call after the office is closed, your doctor will usually have to be 'beeped' by an answering service. Allow 30 to 60 minutes for the service to contact your doctor and for your doctor to return your call. If your concern cannot wait that long, consider immediately seeking assistance in an emergency room or other urgent care facility.

If your child has swallowed something which might be toxic and you are concerned about poisoning, call the local Poison Control Center (you can get the telephone number through the operator or local information). Trained operators are immediately available there to guide you through this type of emergency.

Try not to call after hours with issues that can easily be handled during office hours. After hours calls should be reserved for issues requiring attention and decision-making which **cannot wait until routine office hours**. Make this type of phone call when you need guidance regarding how to handle an emergency such as:

- Abrupt change in your child's level of consciousness (e.g. your child faints, passes out, or is unusually lethargic).
- Persistent temperature over 101 in a child three months of age or older
- Temperature over 100.4 (measured rectally) in a child two months of age or younger
- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing
- Unusual pain (e.g. in the ear, abdomen, or when urinating)
- When your parental intuition tells you that something potentially significant is wrong

When Calling Your Doctor

When you do call your doctor, things will go more smoothly if you do the following:

- Keep your phone line clear so the doctor can return your call
- Have a paper and pencil handy
- Know the name and phone number of your pharmacy
- Have handy any medications you have given your child

Remember your doctors are your partners in assuring your child's health and creating your child's medical home. They want to hear about significant acute child health concerns...day or night.

Dr. Marino is the Director of General Pediatrics at Winthrop- University Hospital and Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Long Island.

➢ The information in Doctor's Corner can not take the place of advice from a health care practitioner who is familiar with your child.

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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription send check, money order, credit card information, or purchase order to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
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480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
US$12 -- One Year
US$24 -- Two Years
US$36 -- Three Years
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

Pp
Parent
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Newsletter

En Español

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Esta sección es una traducción de los artículos sobre el desarrollo del niño publicado en el mes de February, edición de 1997 (volumen 12 , número 2) de Parent and preschooler Newsletter (ISSN 0887-0365). Envie toda pregunta en Inglés al Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center, 480 Old Westbury Road, Roslyn Heights, New York 11577-2215 ó llame al 1-800-595-9365.

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Como entender y disminuir la rivalidad entre hermanos

Connor, de tres años de edad, acaba de quitarle un juguete a su hermana Carly que tiene un año, y la empuja al piso. Mientras su madre corre a reconfortar a la llorosa Carly, se vuelve al observador y explica, "Connor realmente adora a su hermana pequeña - es simplemente que a veces no parece conocer la intensidad de su propia fuerza".

Una de las mayores fuentes de tensión en las familias con niños poco espaciados en el orden de nacimiento, es también uno de los secretos mejor guardados de nuestra sociedad. Los sentimientos crueles y las acciones agresivas entre niños son bastantes comunes y frecuentemente duraderos. Sin embargo, el tema de la rivalidad entre hermanos rara vez se discute abierta y honestamente. Por consiguiente, muchos padres se ven atormentados no solo por los constantes enfrentamientos entre sus hijos e hijas, sino que también por la vergüenza que acompaña la equivocada impresión de que están solos en su sufrimiento.

El hecho es que la abrumadora mayoría de las familias con niños de menos de tres años entre ellos, están plagadas de esta especie de consistente pesadumbre. Por cierto, criar un hijo único no es siempre fácil, y también es cierto que los hermanos y hermanas espaciados cuatro o cinco años entre ellos también pueden tener problemas. Pero la dinámica interpersonal especial que se crea cuando los hermanos están muy poco espaciados, comúnmente hace que las situaciones sean extraordinariamente demandantes.

Comprensión de la dinámica

Cuando un niño pequeño es introducido a un competidor por la atención y el afecto de sus padres, es perfectamente normal que resienta esta intromisión.

De hecho, si el aceptara a su nuevo hermano o hermana sin reservas, uno podría preocuparse de que no halla recibido el tipo de sustento emocional que es tan importante durante los primeros años y que él ahora podría estar en riesgo. Si el niño tiene menos de tres años cuando llega su nuevo hermano o hermana, sus celos y hostilidad serán especialmente fuertes por dos razones. Primero, porque tiene mucho que perder; y segundo, porque tiene habilidades intelectuales limitadas para lidiar con cualquier perdida en que incurra.

Durante los primeros dos o tres años, el mundo de un niño se centra en su ambiente domestico, y su energía emocional está enfocada en establecer una relación con sus protectores primarios. Un niño de cuatro o cinco años por otra parte, ya ha completado típicamente el proceso básico de apego; ordinariamente ya ha entrado en actividades regulares fuera de la casa tal como la preescuela. Sus intereses sociales se han expandido para incluir compañeros y otros adultos. En otros términos, la relación de un niño con sus padres nunca volverá a ser más íntima e intensa que durante la infancia y la niñez.

Además, durante los primeros años, los mensajes emocionales son recibidos y entendidos en maneras muy fundamentales. Las garantías verbales tienen poca importancia, y conceptos abstractos como el amor y el compartir no tienen ningún significando. Solo las interacciones físicas directas tienen verdadero valor; y debido a que el lapso de atención de un niño pequeño es bastante corto, la calidad de tales interacciones no puede compensar por una carencia en cantidad de ellas. Un niño mayor puede ser capaz de deducir y eventualmente sentirse cómodo con la noción de que la suma de un hermano o hermana no disminuye – y hasta puede mejorar – su posición en la familia. Pero un infante o un niño pequeño simplemente no está equipado con las herramientas mentales que permiten que esto suceda sin una buena dosis de dolor.

Preparándose para la reacción

La reacción de un niño mayor cuando el bebé es recién traído al hogar es relativamente leve. Después de todo, el bebé pasa la mayor parte de su tiempo durmiendo y no constituye una gran amenaza. Sin embargo, a medida que las semanas pasan, el niño comienza a sentir que está perdiendo algo de atención de los padres a manos de su hermano o hermana, y puede tratar de ganarla de vuelta imitando al nuevo objeto de del afecto de sus padres.Como resultado, se puede esperar una insistencia en ser acarreado, un abandono de sus logros en el entrenamiento de como ir al baño solo, y otras regresiones a un "comportamiento de bebé".

Unos pocos meses después, cuando el bebé comienza a gatear, caminar y hablar, la situación se deteriora rápidamente. Ahora el bebé exige enormes cantidades de atención de sus padres, y sus muchos logros producen constantes expresiones de afecto en los padres. Esto eleva la competencia a un nivel intolerable para el hermano mayor, quien ahora siente que su hermano o hermana está activamente robándole sus padres. Por lo que el responde golpeando, empujando, pellizcando, y quitándole sus juguetes. Entonces descubre que estos intentos de recobrar el primer lugar en los corazones de sus padres solo

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corazones de sus padres solo le traen reprensiones. Consiguientemente, su rencor por su hermano o hermana crece enormemente, y su alegre perspectiva sobre la vida se agria apreciablemente.

Entre tanto, el bebé está siendo introducido a un mundo diferente al que su hermano o hermana experimentó durante sus primeros años. Mientras el niño mayor solo tuvo sustento de parte de adultos amistosos, la bebé esta siendo sometida a agresión fraternal en forma regular. Como resultado, desarrolla habilidades de supervivencia, como llorar después de aparecer su hermano pero antes que él tenga oportunidad de atacarla. El castigo injusto que recibe subsiguientemente de los ingenuos padres, hacen que el niño mayor se ponga temporalmente más cauteloso, mientras el más pequeño comienza a darse cuenta que tiene capacidad para la represalia. Pronto, el niño menor comienza a dar vuelta la situación en contra del niño mayor y frecuentemente llega a ser el agresor en los enfrentamientos. A este punto, la mayoría de los padres se sienten abrumados por su frustración y su sentido del fracaso. Para su consternación, se descubren a si mismos diciendo palabras que juraron jamas proferirían, "No me importa quien comenzó –ambos están castigados!" Y es fácil imaginar que puede suceder cuando se agrega un tercer hermano o hermana a esta mezcla...

Reducir las dificultades

Que puede hacerse? La solución obvia es espaciar los niños por lo menos en tres años; pero esto no es siempre posible o deseable por una variedad de razones. Si tiene dos o más niños menos espaciados, no se aterre ni desespere; esté dispuesta a aceptar la posibilidad de que surjan malos sentimientos entre sus hijos. Además, no se engañe a si misma pensando que leerle historias pertinentes al tema, incluirlo en discusiones especiales o llevándolo a ver el pabellón de maternidad harán mucha diferencia. Si tiene más de tres años, tales actividades no son necesarias; y si tiene menos de tres años, simplemente no tendrán mucho impacto.

Afortunadamente, hay algunas estrategias efectivas que se pueden emplear. Probablemente no impedirán del todo la erupción de rivalidades entre hermanos, pero deberían ayudar a mantenerla a un nivel manejable, permitiendole a sus niños pasar el desagrado inicial y eventualmente desarrollar algo de afecto genuino entre ellos.

* **No dejar que el niño mayor lastime al bebe.** Esto puede parecer un consejo obvio, pero cada año un número alarmante de niños pequenos le hacen serios daños a sus hermanos más pequeños. Ellos no conocen bien su propia fuerza ni tienen un concepto real de las consecuencias de sus acciones, por lo que es posible que el bebé sufra severos "accidentes" a manos de su hermano o hermana mayor. La vigilancia en la supervisión es crítica. Aunque es importante reconocer que la matonería del niño mayor es normal, es igualmente imperativo que el comprenda que no será permitida. El respeto por sus sentimientos en esta situación nunca debería traducirse en tolerancia de su agresión.

* **No regaloneé al bebé frente al niño mayor.** Esto puede considerarse como de sentido común, pero solo si usted está suficientemente alerta para reconocer la potencialidad de angustia emocional que hay en esto para su niño o niña mayor. Desafortunadamente, muchos padres sucumben a la delicias del bebé y frecuentemente olvidan cuan dañina puede ser su exuberancia para el primogénito. La mayoría de los padres rápidamente aprenden a controlarse a si mismos al respecto, pero es común ver caras cabizbajas en los pequeños que después de haber sido las estrellas del espectáculo por un año o dos, ahora tienen que sentarse al margen y ser virtualmente ignorados, mientras amistades y parientes vienen a toda prisa y se pelean por ahogar de zalamerías y atenciones al bebé recién llegado.

* **No criticar al niño mayor por ninguna regresión.** Como se menciono anteriormente, es de esperar que un niño vuelva a tener diversos "comportamientos de bebe" después de la llegada de un nuevo hermano o hermana. Aunque esto puede ser alarmante e irritante, también debería ser bastante temporal mientras usted no reaccione exageradamente. Castigarlo por hacer cosas que a usted no le molestan — y que a veces hasta lo deleitan cuando son hechas por su hermano o hermana menor — solo aumentará su turbación. Intente tratar tales episodios tan informalmente como sea posible, y haga un esfuerzo extra por alabar y premiar cualquier comportamiento que corresponda a su edad. Recuerde que él considera al bebé como un enemigo formidable en la batalla por su aprobación. Por lo tanto, desalentarlo a que se comporte "como ella" puede ser contraproducente, mientras que enfatizar las ventajas de actuar "como uno de nosotros" debiera trabajar como magia.

* **Dele al niño mayor por lo menos una media hora de atención exclusiva todos los días.** Es crítico hablarle a un niño pequeño en un lenguaje que él verdaderamente comprenda. Muchos padres cometen el error de tratar repetidamente de tranquilizar a su primogénito diciéndole que es tan querido como antes de la llegada del bebé. Pero esto no funcionara a menos que las palabras estén respaldadas por algo que tenga verdadero significado para él; en su mente, atención es igual a amor. Por lo tanto, es una buena idea destinar un período diario regular durante el que usted y él hagan algo especial juntos. Puede ser una sesión de cuentos, una actividad de arte o artesanía, o cualquier cosa. Pero ustedes dos deben estar solos – leyéndole mientras hamaca al bebé en su regazo no cuenta.

* **Este listo para cuando el bebé comience a dar vuelta la tortilla.** Al comienzo es razonable presumir que el niño mayor sea el culpable de los enfrentamientos; por un tiempo tal suposición sera fundamentalmente correcta. Sin embargo, después de pocos meses, el mayor frecuentemente puede ser un participante inocente a medida que el bebé comienza a llorar simplemente porque él ha aparecido. Y luego, el mayor frecuentemente puede llegar a ser la víctima a medida que el niño más pequeño también comienza a aprender comportamientos agresivos. Muchos padres no se percatan de estos cambios críticos hasta después de que el niño mayor ha sido castigado injustamente en numerosas ocasiones. Cada vez que él es castigado injustamente, su resentimiento se ahonda; mientras que el más pequeño se envalentona cada vez más, su agresión queda sin castigo.

* **Mantenga la calma.** Recuerde que es su cariño lo que está en disputa. Después de un tiempo los niños comenzarán a ver los beneficios de ser amigos, y reservarán sus enfrentamientos más flagrantes para cuando usted esté presente, y sea testigo del desagradable evento. Mientras usted no les de la satisfacción que ellos buscan enojandose, tomando lados, o castigándolos demasiado duramente, pronto se darán cuenta de la futilidad de estas escaramuzas y buscaran hacer algo para molestarla de una manera mas apropiada.

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Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Volume 12, Number 3 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — March 1997

A POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP: *Preschool Parent-Teacher Conferences*

"I really enjoyed our time together," commented Lauren's mother as we said our goodbyes following her first parent conference. Earlier during our visit, she'd admitted being a bit anxious about our meeting. I reassured her that most parents feel the same way. Whether your conference is with a child care provider, or a preschool or kindergarten teacher, you can approach this conference with more confidence if you know what to expect and how to use these conferences to help your child make the most of her school experiences.

➢ Purposes Of Conferences

Home-school collaboration takes many different forms, but parent-teacher conferences are the most common. In order to be successful, parents and teachers must share their knowledge and expertise. Collaborations are always a two-way exchange of information. If your child's school doesn't have scheduled conferences you can, and should, request one. Even if you don't think there are issues to discuss, just letting the teacher know you are actively involved is important.

➢ Parents As Experts

You are the expert on your child. Even the term "parent-teacher conference" recognizes the important role parents play in the education of their children. Parents contribute by giving the teacher facts about the child's background or about events at home that are in any way out of the ordinary. Things like premature birth, prior serious health problems, an upcoming move, a new baby, an extended visit from a grandparent, a death in the family, marital problems, or a parent's loss of a job, can affect a child's adjustment in a setting away from home. Be sure to share such occurrences with your child's teacher.

➢ Your Child At Home

A teacher can learn a great deal about a child when you tell the teacher about how your child behaves at home. Does he get along well with his brothers and sisters? Is she whiny? What situations make him fearful or anxious? If, for example, a teacher learns from a parent that a child is frightened by loud noises, she can be more understanding when a fire siren screams and the child reacts with fear.

Teachers are also eager to learn about management techniques that work well with your child. What type of motivation do you find effective in getting your child to assume the responsibility for picking up her toys? If you've discovered that your daughter likes to count objects as she puts them away, this can help prevent power struggles in the preschool. What do you do to settle your child when he is over-excited? What type of discipline works best for you? Your answers to these questions can be very helpful when you and the teacher work together to solve problems.

➢ Reactions to School

Teachers also like to know your child's reaction to school. What activities does your child like the most? Are there some that she does not enjoy? The teacher can use this information to help your youngster make the most of school activities and experiences. If the teacher knows that your child has an aversion to messy, gooey things, the teacher may provide plastic gloves for finger painting and work with your child to make her more comfortable with these kinds of activities. If you've told the teacher that your shy son loves tractors, she may use that information to encourage him to share at group time.

➢ Teachers As Experts

Teachers have the benefit of experience with many children. They can help you compare your child with other children of the same age. They are familiar with developmental milestones and age-appropriate behaviors. They can offer suggestions for ways other parents have solved problems.

➢ A Typical Conference

Mrs. Walters is meeting with her son Tyler's teacher for the first conference of the year. As she walks into the room, the teacher greets her. "Thank you for coming, Mrs. Walters. Won't you sit down?" The teacher asks Mrs. Walters to join her at a table on which she has samples of Tyler's work, screening results, and anecdotal records to share during their visit. The teacher usually begins with a positive statement. "We certainly enjoy Tyler, he's so enthusiastic (or such a kind playmate or good listener)." Then she will generally explain the format of the conference. She might say, "Do you have any specific questions you'd like us to address before we begin sharing information about Tyler?" Or, "Feel free to stop me anytime you'd like me to clarify something," or "I've planned some time for questions at the end of our visit."

... a parent-teacher conference provides a setting in which two experts can share opinions and work together...

Like Tyler's teacher, your child's teacher will discuss your child's development in the four general areas which affect school success: social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development.

Social Development

When the teacher discusses your child's social development she is talking about the way your child relates to other children and adults. She will mention specifics like whether or not your child is participating at school. She will talk about your child's interaction with other children. She might say "William really enjoys playing with the other children," or "William seems a little shy, and has difficulty joining the other children."

She will let you know whether your child assumes responsibility as a member of the group. She might say "Andrea is very good about cleaning up."

Emotional Development

When the teacher talks about your child's emotional development, the teacher will discuss his ability to control his emotions and impulses, such as his ability to exhibit self-control. She might say "Johnny is learning to wait patiently for his turn to pour the juice." She will talk about how your child deals with separation from you and whether she seems happy, angry, or fearful in the school setting. If your child's behavior seems different from her peers she will mention problem areas and you can discuss possible reasons and interventions.

Physical Development

Your child's teacher will report on two types of physical development: large muscle development and fine muscle development. When she discusses your child's ability to jump, hop, skip, throw, or balance, she will be describing how your child's large muscle development approaches what is normal for his age.

She will also talk with you about your child's fine muscle development. These are the skills which will affect his success with paper and pencil when he begins writing in kindergarten. She may say things like, "Davey is able to cut between two lines," or "Mandi is getting good at building with the little Leggos".

Intellectual Development

The teacher's comments about your child's intellectual development will also be divided into two areas: your child's understanding of concepts appropriate for her age; and her ability to communicate with others. "Evan recognizes all of his numbers," or "Jennifer understands the position words, *on*, *under*, *next* and *behind*" are examples of comments the teacher might make to describe your child's progress. Recognizing differences in shape and size, naming body parts, recognizing colors, and letters would all fall under the general heading of concepts.

Not only is a preschooler or kindergartner expected to have mastered certain concepts, he should be able to communicate his knowledge to others. Your child's teacher will discuss your child's ability to express himself, to remember, to articulate, and to reason. She might say "Michelle knows her colors, but she isn't comfortable naming them when we play Color Bingo."

➢ A Powerful Team

Perhaps one of the best aspects of a parent-teacher conference is that it provides a setting in which two experts can share opinions and work together towards a solution to a problem. The problem may be one which reveals itself at home, at school, or both. Suppose Suzie has been jealous of the time mom's been spending with a new baby brother. After hearing the parents describe the ways in which they have tried to deal with the problem, the teacher could offer suggestions for other methods the parents might try. If a teacher mentions that Johnny has been having a hard time sharing toys at preschool, his parents might explain that Johnny, an only child, has no neighborhood children to play with. Learning this, the teacher might suggest that the mother invite some of Johnny's new preschool friends over to play.

If you and the teacher agree that your child is not making normal progress and the cause is not something you can identify individually or jointly, the teacher can give you the names of resources in the community. Teachers are trained to recognize special needs. Your child's teacher may suggest that you seek advice from an audiologist for a possible hearing problem, or a urologist if your five-year old is still having frequent accidents. Following the consultation with a specialist, share what you learn with the teacher.

Do not be afraid to ask questions or share your knowledge and concerns.

Do not be afraid to ask questions or share your knowledge and concerns. If the teacher has spoken in generalities, ask her to give you specific examples to clarify the message. If she says something like, "Jake has difficulty working in groups," that could mean that he's still in the side-by-side play stage or it might mean his play is too aggressive. If your child's teacher says something that you do not understand, you can and should ask her to explain.

The teacher's comments in all these areas will represent a comparison withother children of the same age, or compared to the kinds of behavior children are encouraged to develop. The teacher can tell you if your child's behavior is similar to other children's behavior, or is unusual for his age. She can tell you if your child is more shy or boisterous than most. You can ask her to suggest ways to help your child develop more appropriate play skills.

If both you and your spouse aren't able to attend the conference, you may want to take notes so you can share what you have learned. If you are a single parent, your child's teacher may be an especially valuable partner in child raising.

Before the conference concludes, the teacher may summarize the major points discussed. If she doesn't, you may want to do so. Be sure that your perception of what was discussed is the same as hers.

If you know what to expect at your first parent conference, it will be a rewarding experience. Remember that the goal of a parent-teacher conference is an increased understanding of the child by both parent and teacher. The person who will benefit most from the conference is your child.

Ellen Javernick, M.A. is a teacher and writer in Loveland, Colorado. A former preschool director, she is currently teaching first grade. She is also the author of 10 books including What If Everybody Did That, and Ms. Pollywog's Problem Solving Service.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

BOOKS FOR LEARNING:

🕮 ***Big Bugs*** by Mary Gribbin, Illustrated by Andrew Tewson; Penguin Book; 1996. This book is a fascinating look at bugs, answering the questions kids ask. It is well-structured, containing an index, glossary, "fascinating facts" page, "big giggles" page, "comparative sizes" page with a pull-out poster, as well as a page for coloring. *Big Bugs* is one in a series of "Big" books by Mary Gribbin. Also in this series are ***Big Ocean Creatures*** and ***Big Animals*** both illustrated by Peter Bull and ***Big Trucks*** illustrated by Julian Baker.

🕮 ***The Handmade Alphabet*** written and illustrated by Laura Rankin; Penguin Books; 1996. (also available in hard cover from Dial Books). This book is an intelligent portrayal of the manual alphabet. The contents are simply twenty-six different illustrations of hands of different sizes and colors, each hand in the position of a letter of the manual alphabet. The magic of the book is found in the unique way in which each letter is depicted.

🕮 ***Animalia*** written and illustrated by Graeme Base; Puffin Books; 1996. *Animalia* is an exceptionally beautiful book. Each page depicts a different letter of the alphabet and, using alliteration, creates a striking word picture. It is illustrated with splendid drawings of many items that begin with each letter of the alphabet. This book is charming.

🕮 ***What's Inside?*** written and illustrated by Eric Hill; Puffin Books; 1996. *What's Inside?* is one in a recent series of lift-the-flap books by Eric Hill which also include ***Baby Animals*** and ***What's the Opposite?*** On each page there is a question. When your child lifts the flap on the page, the answer to the question appears. Kids will love lifting the flaps and finding the answers.

🕮 ***The Backyard*** written and illustrated by John Collier; Penguin Books; 1996. A backyard seems like a mundane, everyday place. But what happened there a million years ago? The book teaches the concept of "process" in a very distinctive and insightful way. This is one of those books that you read as a child and remember all of your life.

🕮 ***Road Builders*** by B.G. Hennessy; illustrated by Simms Taback; Puffin Books; 1996. An amusing and detailed description of how a road is built. The pictures depict all races and both sexes working together on the road. The book also comes with free stickers for extra fun.

🕮 ***And Still the Turtle Watched*** by Sheila MacGill-Callahan; Illustrated by Barry Moser; Puffin Books; 1996. Long ago, native Americans carved a turtle on a huge rock. The turtle watched over the land until, in an act of vandalism, paint was sprayed over the turtle's eyes. After years of waiting, the turtle was found and cleaned. It was moved to a garden where the turtle could once again watch the land. This is a very powerful, often sad, story about environmental awareness - best for older children.

🕮 ***Animal Babies*** by Valerie Tracqui (Translated by Timothy Froggatt); Charlesbridge Publishing; 1996. Extraordinary photos of animal babies. Thick, sturdy pages for the very young child. This is a lovely book for beginning readers or for parents to read to young children.

DEAR READER

I've been going to teacher conferences for years. Ever since my son was in preschool, I regularly attended all the "open house" meetings and conferences. My son is in high school now, and I still go (although he dearly wishes I'd stop). I go because it is my best opportunity to find out what is going on. What he's learning, or supposed to be learning. Where he excels and where he needs a bit of help.

I blundered around in the early years, not knowing what to ask, what I was hearing, or what to do with the information. In this issue, Ellen Javernick tells parents what to expect at parent-teacher conferences. I wish I had Ellen's wisdom and information to guide me.

Amy Houts talks about activities which will help stimulate your child's mind, and the Library Resource Corner contains reviews of educational books to expand your child's horizons.

This is one chocked-full issue. We hope you find it helpful.

Neale Schwartzberg Editor

PRESCHOOLER IN THE KITCHEN PLUS

Learning Is Child's Play

"Why are you breaking up your cheese into little pieces?" I asked a preschool boy.

"Because then I will have more," he replied.

He was obviously happy with his discovery and I cherished the fact that he could give me that insight into his thinking, even if it was faulty.

Every day youngsters make comparisons, reason, solve problems, and explore the world around them. They learn basic concepts of color, shape, size, and number. You can help your preschooler develop his reasoning skills, increase his knowledge, and encourage his ability in problem solving through play and kitchen activities.

Of course, these activities should be fun for your child. If your child is not ready and willing to do them, follow your youngster's lead. Never force a child to play.

One Year

Find the Spoon: At one year of age children don't realize objects continue to exist even when the child can't see them. This game helps your child learn that the spoon is in the pot, even when the lid is on.

While you are working in the kitchen, give your one-year-old a small pot with a lid. Show her the spoon, plastic cup, or other object as you hide it in the pot. Replace the lid and say "Find the spoon." You can repeat this with other kitchen objects and items found in the home.

Two Years

Same & Different: This game helps your preschooler to recognize when objects look the same, and teaches the beginnings of classification.

Place two spoons, two cups, and two small bowls in front of your two-year-old. Pick up one spoon and say "See this spoon? Give me one like this one." Repeat with the cup and the bowl.

Three Years

Give Me Two: Although many children can count, they do not understand the relationship between the words "one" and "two", and actually counting objects "one" and "two". This activity helps children to learn that relationship.

You will need four crackers, four cheese cubes, and four apple slices. Do this activity right before snack time and let your youngster eat the snacks after you play the game.

Place four crackers on a plate in front of your child. Hold out your hand and say "Please give me two." Help her count aloud as she gives them to you. Then give the crackers back to her. Repeat with the cheese and apples.

Which is Bigger?: Three-year-olds learn about size in this game, and ordering objects from smallest to largest encourages comparison skills.

Break off one part of a graham cracker so that one piece is at least twice as large as the other. Place both cracker pieces in front of your preschooler and say, "please point to the bigger one." Repeat with a bread stick and an apple.

Three to Four Years

Give Me the Heavy One: Preschoolers often think that if two things look alike they must be the same. This is not always true. This activity helps illustrate this point and teaches the concept of weight. You will need a full juice box and an empty one. Say "these boxes look alike, but they aren't. Pick up each one and give me the heavy one." Place them both on the table and ask for the light one.

Four to Five Years

Point to the Shape: This activity helps your preschooler recognize and name shapes.

You will need three circles, squares, and triangles. You can use crackers, bread cut into shapes, or you can cut these shapes out of paper. Arrange them in a random order in three rows. Ask your youngster to point to the circle in each row. Repeat with the square and the triangle. Then your child can eat the crackers, or use the paper shapes to make a picture for the refrigerator door.

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Five to Six Years

Same & Different: This activity helps your preschooler to see and verbalize classification.

Begin with an apple and a banana. Both are fruit, but how are they alike and different? Ask "how is an apple different from a banana?" (One is red, the other is yellow; one is round, the other is long; one is crisp when you bite into it and the other is smooth). Then ask, "How is an apple and a banana the same?" (They are both fruit and both foods we eat). You can do this with other pairs of objects found around your home.

Publisher
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
**North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center**
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription send check, money order, or credit card information to:
**Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
US$12 – One Year
US$24 – Two Years
US$36 – Three Years
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of
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Volume 12, Number 3 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* March 1997

UNA PODEROSA ASOCIACION: Conferencias entre Padres y Profesores de Pre-escolares

"Realmente disfruté el tiempo que pasamos juntas", comentó la madre de Laura al despedirnos después de su primera conferencia de padres. Durante la visita había admitido sentirse un poco ansiosa con respecto a la reunión. Yo la tranquilicé diciéndole que la mayoría de los padres se sienten así. Ya sea que su conferencia sea con un proveedor de cuidado de niños, o una profesora pre-escolar, usted podrá abordar esta conferencia con más confianza si
sabe que esperar y como usarlas para ayudar a su niño o niña a aprovechar al máximo su experiencia escolar.

Los propositos de las conferencias:

La colaboración entre el hogar y la escuela toma formas diferentes, pero las conferencias de padres y profesores es la mas común. A fin de tener éxito, padres y profesores deben compartir sus conocimientos y experiencias. Las colaboraciones son siempre un intercambio de información de dos vias. Si la escuela de su niño o niña no programa conferencias, usted puede, y debería pedir una. Aun pensando que no hay nada que discutir, es importante simplemente dejar que la profesora sepa que usted esta activamente involucrada.

Los padres como expertos

Usted es el experto o experta en lo que toca a su niño. Incluso el término "conferencia de padres y profesores" reconoce el importante papel que los padres juegan en la educación de sus niños. Los padres contribuyen dándole al profesor hechos sobre el pasado del niño o sobre circunstancias en el hogar que de alguna manera pueden ser fuera de lo común. Cosas como un nacimiento prematuro, problemas serios de salud previos, un cambio de casa, un nuevo bebé, una visita extendida de uno de los abuelos, una muerte en la familia, problemas maritales, o la pérdida del trabajo de uno de los padres. Cualquiera de estas situaciones pueden afectar el ajuste de un niño a su entorno fuera del hogar. Asegúrese de compartir tal información con la profesora o profesor de su niño.

Su niño en el hogar

Un maestro puede aprender mucho sobre un niño cuando usted le cuenta como su niño se comporta en el hogar.

Se lleva bien con sus hermanos y hermanas? Es lloron o llorona? Que situaciones le dan miedo o lo ponen ansioso? Si por ejemplo, una profesora sabe por uno de los padres que un niño se asusta con los ruidos fuertes, ella puede ser mas comprensiva cuando se escucha el sonido de una sirena de incendio y el niño reaccione con miedo.

Los profesores también tienen interés en conocer técnicas de intervencion sobre la conducta que funcionan bien con su niño. Que tipo de motivación encuentra usted efectiva para lograr que su niño asuma responsabilidad por recoger sus juguetes? Si usted ha descubierto que a su hija le gusta contar objetos mientras los guarda, esto puede ayudar a prevenir luchas de poder en la pre-escolar. Que hace usted para calmar a su niño cuando esta sobre-excitado? Que tipo de disciplina funciona mejor para usted? Sus respuestas a estas preguntas pueden ser muy útiles cuando usted y la profesora trabajen juntas para resolver problemas.

Reacciones a la escuela

Los profesores también quieren conocer la reacción de su niño o niña con respecto a la escuela. Que actividades son las que más le gustan a su niña? Hay alguna que no le gusta? La profesora puede usar esta información para ayudar a su niña a aprovechar al máximo las experiencias y actividades de la escuela. Si la profesora sabe que su niño tiene una aversión hacia las cosas desordenadas y pegajosas, puede proveerle guantes plásticos para pintar con los dedos y trabajar con ella para hacerla sentirse más cómoda con estos tipos de actividades. Si usted le ha contado a la profesora que su tímido niño adora los tractores, ella puede usar esta información para estimularlo a que comparta a la hora de las actividades en grupo.

Los profesores como expertos

Las profesoras tienen el beneficio de tener experiencia con muchos niños. Gracias a esto, pueden ayudarla a comparar su niño con otros de la misma edad. Ellas están familiarizadas con los hitos del desarrollo y con los comportamientos apropiados para la edad. Pueden ofrecer sugerencias basadas en la manera que otros padres han resuelto ciertos problemas.

Una conferencia típica

La señora Rivera se reúne con la profesora de su hijo Tyler para la primera conferencia del año. Al entrar en la sala, la profesora la saluda. "Gracias para venir, señora Rivera. Por que no se sienta?" La profesora acompaña a la señora Rivera a una mesa sobre la que tiene muestras del trabajo de Tyler, resultados de exámenes, y datos anecdóticos para compartir durante la visita. Comúnmente la profesora comienza con una declaración positiva. "Por supuesto que estamos felices con Tyler, es tan entusiasta (o un compañero de juegos tan generoso, o es tan bueno para escuchar)". Luego ella generalmente explicara el formato de la conferencia. Ella podría decir, "tiene usted alguna pregunta especifica antes de que empecemos a compartir información sobre Tyler?" O, "Siéntase con entera libertad para pararme en cualquier momento para que le aclare algo", o "Pensé que seria mejor dejar un tiempo para preguntas al final de nuestra entrevista".

Igual que la profesora de Tyler, la profesora de su niño discutirá el desarrollo de su niño en las cuatro áreas generales que afectan el éxito en la escuela: el desarrollo social, emocional, físico, e intelectual.

El desarrollo social

Cuando la profesora discute el desarrollo social de su niño se

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refiere a la manera en que su niño se relaciona con otros niños y adultos. Mencionará casos específicos, tal como si su niño participa o no en la escuela. Hablará sobre la interacción de su niño con otros niños. Podría decir "Hernán realmente goza jugando con otros niños", o "Hernán parece un poco tímido, y tiene dificultad juntándose con otros niños".

Ella le hará saber si su niño asume responsabilidad como un miembro del grupo. Podría decir, "Andrea es muy buena con respecto a limpiar".

El desarrollo emocional

Cuando la profesora hable del desarrollo emocional de su niño, se estará refiriendo a su capacidad para controlar sus emociones e impulsos, tal como su capacidad para mostrar auto-control. Ella podría decir, "Andrés esta aprendiendo a esperar pacientemente su turno para servirse jugo". Hablará sobre como su niño lidia con la separación entre usted y él y si parece feliz, arisco o miedoso en la escuela. Si el comportamiento de su niño parece ser diferente al de sus compañeras, ella mencionará áreas que son un problema y usted podrá discutir algunas de las posibles razones y como intervenir.

El desarrollo físico

La profesora de su niño le informará sobre dos tipos de desarrollo físico: el desarrollo de los músculos grandes y el desarrollo de los músculos finos. Cuando ella discute la capacidad de su niño para saltar, brincar, tirar, o equilibrarse, estará describiendo como el desarrollo de los músculos grandes de su niño se compara con lo que es normal para su edad.

La profesora también conversará con usted sobre el desarrollo de los músculos finos de su niño. Estas son las habilidades que afectaran el éxito de su niño con papel y lápiz cuando comience a escribir en el kindergarten. Puede decir cosas como, "David es capaz de cortar entre dos lineas", o "Martita se esta poniendo buena para construir cosas con los Legos pequeños".

El desarrollo intelectual

Los comentarios de la profesora sobre el desarrollo intelectual de su niño también se dividirán en dos áreas: la comprensión de conceptos de acuerdo a su edad, y su capacidad para comunicarse con otros. Para describir el progreso de su niño la profesora podría hacer comentarios como, "Eduardo reconoce todos los números", o "Julita comprende las palabras que tienen que ver con posición; sobre, debajo, próximo y detrás". Bajo el título general de conceptos caen, por ejemplo, reconocer diferencias en la forma y el tamaño, nombrar las partes del cuerpo, y reconocer colores y letras.

No solamente se espera que un niño pre-escolar o de kindergarten haya dominado ciertos conceptos, sino que también debería ser capaz de comunicarlo a otros. La profesora de su niño discutirá su capacidad para expresarse a si mismo, para recordar, articular y para razonar. Ella podría decir "Carlota conoce los colores, pero no se siente cómoda nombrándolos cuando jugamos al Bingo de Color".

Un equipo poderoso

Quizás uno de los mejores aspectos de una conferencia entre padres y profesores es que provee una situación en la que dos expertos pueden compartir opiniones y trabajar juntos hacia la solución de un problema. El problema puede ser uno que se manifiesta en el hogar, en la escuela, o ambos. Supongamos que Susanita ha sentido celos por el tiempo que su mama le ha dedicado a su nuevo hermanito. Después de oír a los padres describir las maneras en que han tratado de lidiar con el problema, la profesora podría ofrecer sugerencias sobre otros métodos que los padres podrían intentar. Si la profesora menciona que Andrés tiene dificultades para compartir juguetes en la pre-escuela, sus padres podrían explicar que Andrés es hijo único y que en el vecindario no hay niños con los que puede jugar. Ál saber esto, la profesora podría sugerir que la madre invite a jugar a algunos de los nuevos amigos de Andrés en la pre-escuela. Si usted y la profesora concuerdan en que su niño no esta progresando normalmente y la causa no es algo que usted pueda identificar individual o conjuntamente, la profesora puede decirle que clases de recursos hay en la comunidad. Los profesores están entrenados para reconocer necesidades especiales. La profesora de su niño puede sugerirle que busque ayuda de una audióloga por un posible problema auditivo, o un urólogo, si su hija de cinco años todavía tiene frecuentes accidentes. Después de consultar un especialista, comparta lo que ha averiguado con la profesora de su niño o niña.

No tema hacer preguntas o de compartir sus conocimientos y preocupaciones. Si la profesora ha hablado en generalidades, pídale que le de ejemplos específicos para aclarar el mensaje. Si dice algo así como, "Javier tiene dificultad para trabajar en grupos", puede significar que el todavía esta en la etapa de jugar lado a lado, o podría significar que su manera de jugar es demasiado agresiva. Si la profesora de su niño dice algo que usted no comprende, usted puede y debería pedir una explicación.

Los comentarios de la profesora en todas estas áreas representaran una comparación con otros niños de la misma edad, o una comparación con los tipos de comportamiento que a los niños se les fomentan. La profesora puede decirle si el comportamiento de su niño es parecido al comportamiento de otros niños, o es inusitado para su edad. Ella puede decirle si su niño es mas tímido o mas bullicioso que la mayoría. Usted le puede pedir que le sugiera maneras para ayudar a su niño a desarrollar habilidades para jugar mas apropiadas.

Si usted y su cónyuge no pueden asistir juntos a la conferencia, quizás quiera tomar notas para que posteriormente pueda compartir con él o ella lo que ha averiguado. Si usted es una madre sola, la profesora de su niño puede ser una aliada especialmente valiosa en la crianza de su niño.

Antes de concluir la conferencia, la profesora puede resumir los puntos importantes discutidos. Si no lo hace, quizás usted quiera hacerlo. Asegúrese que su percepción de lo que se trató sea la misma que la de ella.

Si usted sabe qué esperar de su primera conferencia de padres y profesores, será una experiencia reconfortante. Recuerde que la meta de una conferencia de padres y profesores es una mayor comprensión del niño tanto por parte de los padres como de los profesores. La persona que mas se beneficiará de la conferencia es su niño o niña.

Ellen Javernick, M.A. , es una profesora y escritora que vive en Loveland, Colorado. Ex directora de una pre-escuela, actualmente enseña primer grado. También es la autora de 10 libros incluyendo "What If Everybody Did That" (Que Pasaría si Todos Hicieron Eso), y "Ms. Pollywog's Problem Solving Service" (El Servicio para Resolver Problemas de Ms. Pollywog).

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Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Volume 12, Number 4 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* **April - 1997**

SPELLBOUND: *Is Television Seducing Our Kids?*

"I want it! I want it!" screams a three-year-old girl whose otherwise angelic features are contorted with rage and desperation. Her mother glances nervously about in embarrassment, then hoping no one will notice her capitulation, she throws the coveted drink, cereal, doll, action figure or T-shirt into her shopping cart. "Don't worry, honey," she reassures, Mommy will get it for you."

This vignette, all too familiar to any parent who has ever ventured into a store accompanied by a young child, is notable on several counts. First of all, it is no exaggeration to say that children have become absolutely spellbound by the products that are regularly paraded in front of their eyes by television. Spellbound, that is, in the original sense of being held captive by magic. How else to explain the intense desire and near hysteria that seems to erupt whenever children come within striking distance of well-publicized junk food and toys? There was a time when such desperation in a young child was reserved for separation from mother, not separation from Tickle-Me-Elmo.

Of equal importance is the fact that parents often feel so helpless in the face of their children's emotional rampage. I remember once standing at the meat counter of my local grocery store while my two-and-a-half year old son lay on the floor screaming for Count Chocula cereal. Next to me was a mother who had recently consulted me about some problems she was having with her own preschooler. Glancing nervously between me and my livid, blue-faced hellion, we made some small talk about how tough it was to be a mom. At that moment I would have gladly bought him a box of Count Chocula if it would have quieted him down.

How is it that rational parents can be so cowed by their children's demands for material things? And how have children come to believe that they will become playground pariahs without certain poorly made toys or nutritionally bankrupt cereals. Certainly, very few parents work to instill an unrelenting craving for material objects in their young children. In fact, all of our institutions -- family, school and religion -- emphasize the primacy of human relations, and not material goods, for furthering healthy emotional development.

▪ Children Are A Special Audience

Our children, of course, have learned to covet material things at younger and younger ages due to the training of television and advertisers. Before Reagan's policy of deregulating television, children were thought to comprise a "special audience". It was generally recognized that they had special needs, and that it was the responsibility of broadcasters to make certain that children were not exploited for commercial purposes. Commercials were significantly controlled and good programming for children was not hard to find. Unfortunately, Mark Fowler, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission under President Reagan, forever changed the nature of childhood when he declared that television was just another appliance, "a toaster with pictures." From that point on, children were no longer accorded the protection they deserved. Commercials took up greater and greater amounts of program time and eventually gave birth to what is politely called the "program length commercial", programs which are developed by toy manufacturers, and advertisers. Strawberry Shortcake, Transformers, He-Man, and My Little Pony were all programs conceived, not with the idea of educating or even entertaining children, but with the sole purpose of convincing children to buy products.

Young children are particularly susceptible to the effects of media. Before the age of about six, children are incapable of

Continued » » »

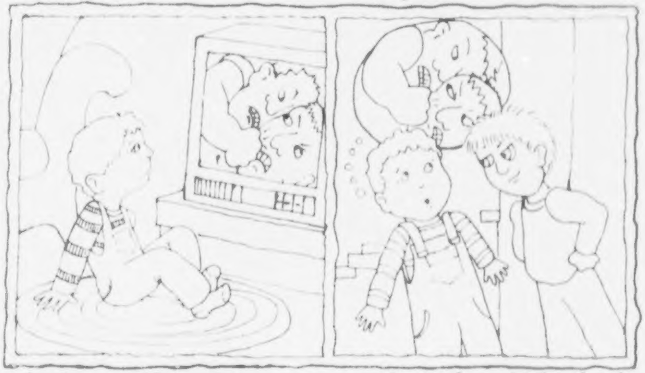
understanding the distinction between reality and fantasy. Preschool children inhabit a world that is magical, unique, and very different from the world of grown-ups, teenagers, or even older children. Preschoolers believe in Santa Claus and the tooth fairy. Piaget, who spent a lifetime studying the ways in which children think, identified preschoolers as being in the preoperational stage of thinking. Thinking at this stage is black and white, egocentric, and very concrete. For a preschool "what you see is what you get," and no amount of explanation will convince a young child that what he or she is seeing is "only make-believe."

For these reasons, most parents instinctively know that programs and movies for preschoolers need to be gentle and non-threatening. Of course, no reasonably healthy youngster is going to be irreparably damaged by occasionally seeing an inappropriate movie or television show, but such experiences are still upsetting, disturbing and unnecessary. While older children can be reassured by "Don't worry honey, it's just a movie," such reassurances are meaningless to the preschooler.

Young children are busy developing a sense of self. This sense of self is more easily generated when the world around them feels predictable and safe. Young children are poorly served by experiences which make the world feel like a dangerous place. Exposing children to movies and television shows which are traumatizing ultimately makes them fearful and less capable.

▪ Children and TV Violence

Forty years of research has consistently shown that children who watch a lot of television are more fearful, more aggressive, more desensitized to violence, and less creative than their lighter-viewing counterparts. Parents and teachers are becoming increasingly aware that their children are having trouble paying attention, seem to believe that personal interaction consists mainly of karate chops and accompanying shouts of "hiya-a-a-a", and are less interested in active involvement in everything from sports to simply playing with friends.



That is not to say that all television is bad for children. Indeed, there are a number of television programs that are entertaining, wholesome, and educational. PBS, Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel can be counted on to produce shows that are appropriate and often enlightening for preschoolers. Perennial favorites such as Sesame Street, Lambchop's Play-along, and Barney and Friends receive high marks from parents, children and professionals. Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, which has delighted children for two generations, shows that it is possible to be entertaining, reassuring and helpful to children.

Parents, however, must become increasingly active in sorting through the hundreds of programs and finding those that are truly worthwhile for their children. We must become familiar with what our children are seeing. After all, by the time a child graduates from high school, he or she will have spent 50% more time in front of a television screen than in front of a teacher.

▪ Watch Television With Your Child

Children whose parents watch with them understand more of what they see. Watching together provides the opportunity to discuss what is going on. Whether aggressive actions, junk cereals, or misleading commercials, comments such as "I wonder if there was another way to solve that instead of fighting" or "Those toys look so good, but remember when you had one and it broke right away?" help children begin to think critically about what they are seeing. It is this ability to view the media critically, to understand its agendas and biases that is the beginning of media literacy. Without this understanding our children are continuously being "sold a bill of goods." They are being told that useless products are necessary for personal happiness, and that solving interpersonal conflict with violence is an acceptable solution. These are not the kinds of lessons that most parents are anxious to teach their children. When all is said and done, we are still the greatest influence on our developing children. It is imperative that we maintain our influence by avoiding those programs that conflict with our values, and encouraging those shows which promote healthy child development.

Madeline Levine, Ph.D. is the author of *__Viewing Violence: How Media Violence Affects Your Child's and Adolescent's Development__* *(Doubleday). She is a frequent speaker on the topic of media violence and child and adolescent development. Dr. Levine lives in Kentfield, California, with her husband and three sons.*

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

1. Watch television with your child.
2. Put children on a television diet. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends viewing be restricted to two hours per day or less.
3. Teach children to watch with a purpose. Channel surfing is sure to dull a child's mind.
4. Encourage reading. Reading is still the best road to imagination, creativity and reflection.
5. Use your economic power. A single letter is considered to represent a thousand voices.
6. Ask your child's school for media literacy programs.

When You Turn Off the TV...Then What?

- It's Spring! Cut out daisies and tulips or other real, or make-believe, flowers and create an indoor garden.
- Say "cheese"! Buy your child a disposable camera (with flash for indoors) and ask her to capture the people, objects, and situations that make her happy.
- Collect rocks. Take a walk with your youngster and look for interesting rocks.
- Make tracings of your child's, and your own hands and feet. Put hand tracings on each persons door. Make a trail of foot prints around the house.
- Sit outside and listen to all the sounds of your neighborhood.
- Snuggle time. Find a good book, snuggle up, and read with your child.

Resources

Creative Reading For Kids

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, illustrated by Angel Dominguez; Artisan Workman Publishing; New York, NY; 1996. This is a magnificent rendering of the classic. The whimsical nature of the original text is enhanced by exceptionally beautiful illustrations - a splendid edition of the beloved *"Alice"*.

Voyage of the Basset by James C. Christensen, with Renwick St. James and Alan Dean Foster; Artisan Workman Publishing; New York, NY; 1996. *Voyage of the Basset* takes the reader on a fantastic journey along with Cassandra Aisling, her father, and her skeptical older sister. The motto of the group is "Believing is Seeing", loyalty, honesty, morality, and overcoming adversity are the themes. Lush illustrations and beautiful prose. Create a classic in the making.

Animals Black and White - by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, Mass., 1996 This clever and imaginative book will delight youngsters. There is a riddle with an abstract illustration of a feature of the animal followed by the answer and a beautiful illustration of the entire animal. It is a wonderful chance for dialogue and learning.

Ms. MacDonald Has a Class by Jan Ormerod; Clarion Books, New York, N.Y., 1996. This book is a joyful celebration of individuality, creativity, and how we can look at life in different ways. A class takes a trip to a farm and comes away from this experience filled with thoughts about what it might be like to be something other than what they are. The book offers a wonderful springboard for discussion.

Tyrannosaurus Tex by Betty G. Birney; Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass., 1996. This book is a clever and fey telling of a tall tale. The hero is a giant beast who helps stop a prairie fire, foil rustlers and avert disaster. Much fun!

Children and Media

Center for Media Literacy
1962 S. Shenandoah Street
Los Angeles, CA 90034
(310) 559-2944. A nonprofit organization that promotes media education. Offers books as well as complete media literacy training materials.

Center for Media Education
1511 K Street, N.W.
Suite 518
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 628-2620
http://www.cme.org/cme
A national nonprofit organization that carrys on the work of Action for Children's Television (ACT). Their web site is an excellent source of information for parents and professionals.

Write to *Parent and preschooler Newsletter* for other Media Resources. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and ask for "Children and Media Resource List".

DEAR READER

I confess I have strong feelings about television and children. On the one hand, I remember spending quite a few hours watching violent cartoons when I was a child, yet I still grew up to be a fairly nonviolent and responsible adult. But I have also spent several years as a television researcher. Little children really do turn from watching characters hit one another on the screen, to walloping their play-mates in disputes over toys. Would they have done that anyway? Possibly. But, the research is clear that viewing violence promotes violence, as well as a real fear for one's safety. It can not help a child's sense of security to see violent actions and aggressive people on their tv screen.

The other important issue concerns television commercials. Young children's difficulties distinguishing fact from fiction, and recognizing hyperbole and outrageous claims, makes them vulnerable to less than scrupulous advertising.

We all have to protect children. Advertisers, writers, and producers must create quality programming and honest commercials. But as parents we have a special responsibility to help our children use television wisely. After you finish Madeline Levine's wonderful and thought-provoking article, check out the Library Resources for books to stimulate your child's imagination and creativity, and organizations to help you learn more about children and media.

Have a very good April! See you next month.

Neala Schwartzberg Editor

Children's Television Act

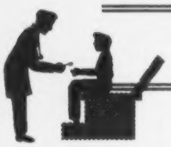
In 1990, Congress passed the Children's Television Act, requiring television to serve the "educational and informational" needs of children. In August, 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) strengthened the Children's Television Act directing stations to air three hours of educational children's programs a week.

The new rules also strengthen the definition of "educational." Such programs must have education as a "significant purpose" with a clearly-stated instructional objective, as well as a target age group of children for the program.

Stations must identify which programs are educational and the age of their intended audience at the time of the broadcast either through TV Guide listings, or with some type of on-air icon or other announcement. Every quarter, stations must place information about how they are complying with the Children's Television Act in their public inspection files for review by the community.

For more information about the Children's Television Act, contact the Center for Media Education (see above for address).

The Doctor's Corner



Tummy Trouble

The sizzle of a summer cookout holds the promise of good food, fresh air, and family togetherness. But it can also result in a nasty bout of tummy trouble.

Because bacteria and food go together like ants and picnics, extra care is needed during the summer months. Warm, moist food surfaces beckon to unfriendly bacteria, and once deposited, they grow rapidly. When foods are eaten, these bacteria invade body tissues or produce toxins.

Most of these unwanted guests are short-term visitors; they cause vomiting, diarrhea, and fever within 6 - 12 hours of their arrival and are gone within 24 hours. Your child's symptoms are the body's attempt to evict the offensive intruders and their inflammatory toxins.

There are rare types of food poisoning bacteria that have a later onset and last longer but, in general, there's no need to worry much about symptoms that last a day or two. If symptoms do last longer, or are accompanied by decreased urination (which could signal dehydration), see a doctor immediately. Otherwise, make sure your child is awake and alert, and drinks plenty of clear fluids (e.g. sports drinks, broths, or flat soda).

The best thing to do is avoid the whole problem. Keep cold foods cold, and hot foods hot, storing each separately. Grill all foods at the picnic site rather than partially precooking at home, use separate plates and utensils for raw and cooked foods, and promptly refrigerate or dispose of perishable leftovers.

Of course, there are other reasons for stomach problems. The tempting array of goodies prepared for cookouts may lead your children to ask for "some more", and you may hear the refrain "My tummy hurts!" afterwards. How can you be sure your child's tummy ache is due to dietary excess and not something more serious?

Fortunately, the garden variety tummy ache - a catchall term for children's abdominal pain - is rarely serious. Pediatric gastroenterologists, doctors who specialize in treating children's stomach and bowel problems, divide abdominal pain into two categories.

Functional pain is that everyday gut-wrenching discomfort that sends us running to the bathroom when our bowel becomes "irritable" and speeds up the normal contractions that move food through our digestive system. It tends to be chronic and worsen when stress is present, certain foods are eaten, or we overindulge. This kind of pain centers around the belly button, causing your child to grimace, cry, or double over. It is not uncommon for your child to have a headache, feel nauseous, light-headed, or tired when experiencing this type of pain. However, in most cases the pain goes away within three hours after it begins, and your child usually goes back to normal activities when the pain stops. Organic pain, on the other hand, doesn't behave like the typical tummy ache and is more likely to be linked to a disease.

Your child's physician will be more concerned about any pain that is one-sided, and concentrated away from the belly-button, or first time abdominal pain that occurs suddenly, or whenever your child eats, goes to the bathroom, or engages in activity. Dramatic symptoms like rectal bleeding, vomiting, heartburn, sleep disturbance, severe constipation, weight loss and growth failure, all signal the need for an immediate visit to the doctor.

If your child complains of tummy aches but doesn't have the organic abdominal warning signals, you can help by increasing the fiber in your child's diet, encouraging moderation in eating, and decreasing stress. You can also encourage exercise to make the most of the glorious summer weather, and your family time together.

Dr. Chris Liacouras is a pediatric gastroenterologist at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the nations first children's hospital, is a leader in patient care, education and research, and provides comprehensive pediatric services to children from birth through age 19

➢ Public Engagement Campaign ≺

Prominent entertainers, corporations, and child development experts have established an unprecedented public awareness campaign to focus on new and compelling evidence about the importance of the first three years of life. The campaign is designed to promote family involvement in young children's healthy development and school readiness, to help communities act on behalf on young children and their families, and to encourage early childhood organizations to help families nurture their children.

Look For an Hour-Long ABC Prime Time Special
"I Am Your Child"
Scheduled for Monday, April 28, 1997

This newsletter will be publishing some great articles on the importance of the first three years of life in upcoming issues. Please let us have your comments and questions!

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
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Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
US$12 -- One Year
US$24 -- Two Years
US$36 -- Three Years
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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En Español

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Volume 12, Number 4
An International Resource for Professionals and Parents
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DESLUMBRADO: Esta seduciendo la televisión a nuestros niños?

"¡Yo lo quiero! ¡Yo lo quiero!" grita una niña de tres años cuyas facciones, que de otra manera son angelicales, se contorsionan con saña y desesperación. Su madre mira abochornada y nerviosamente a su alrededor, y, rogando que nadie haya notado su capitulación, tira la codiciada bebida, cereal, muñeca, figura de acción o camiseta en el carrito de compras. "No te preocupes, querida", dice tranquilizadora, "Mami te lo comprará".

Esta escena, demasiado familiar a cualquier madre o padre que se haya aventurado alguna vez a una tienda acompañada de un niño pequeño, es notable en varios aspectos. Ante todo, no es exageración decir que los niños quedan absolutamente deslumbrados por los productos que desfilan regularmente frente a sus ojos en la televisión. Deslumbrados, en el sentido original, el de ser prisionero de un encantamiento mágico. Como explicar de otra manera el intenso y casi histérico deseo que parece estallar cuando los niños estan dentro de la "zona de influencia" de la bien publicitada y poco nutritiva comida o juguetes? Había una época cuando tal desesperación en un niño pequeño estaba reservada para la separación de la madre, no la separación de una muñeca como Tickle-Me-Elmo.

De igual importancia es el hecho que los padres frecuentemente se sienten inútiles frente al alboroto emocional de sus niños. Recuerdo una vez estando frente al mostrador de la carne de mi supermercado local, mi hijo de dos años y medio se revolcaba en el piso gritando que quería el cereal Conde Chocula. A mi lado estaba una madre que recientemente me había consultado sobre algunos problemas que tenia con su propio niño pre escolar. Mirándome nerviosamente a mi y mi lívido monstruito de ojos azules, hablamos superficialmente sobre lo difícil que era ser mamá. En ese momento, feliz le hubiera comprado una caja de cereal Conde Chocula si esto lo hubiera silenciado.

Como es que padres racionales pueden sentirse tan acobardados por las exigencias de sus niños por cosas materiales? Y como es que los niños han llegado a creer que se convertirían en parias sin tener ciertos juguetes pobremente fabricados o cereales nutritivamente inútiles? Por cierto que muy pocos padres tratan de inculcar un tenaz apetito por cosas materiales en sus niños pequeños. De hecho, todas nuestras instituciones -- la familia, la escuela y la religión -- enfatizan la primacía de las relaciones humanas, y no de cosas materiales, para fomentar un desarrollo emocional sano.

Los Niños Son Una Audiencia Especial

Nuestros niños, por supuesto, han aprendido a codiciar cosas materiales a edades más y más tempranas debido al entrenamiento de la televisión y de los publicistas. Antes de existir la política de Reagan de deregularizar la televisión, se pensaba que los niños eran una "audiencia especial". Se reconocía generalmente que ellos tenían necesidades especiales, y que era responsabilidad de las estaciones de televisión asegurarse de que los niños no fueran explotados con propósitos comerciales. Los avisos comerciales eran controlados significativamente y no era difícil encontrar buena programación para niños. Desafortunadamente, Mark Fowler, el presidente de la Comisión Federal de Comunicaciones bajo el Presidente Reagan, cambió para siempre la naturaleza de la niñez cuando declaró que la televisión era simplemente otro aparato casero, "una tostadora con imágenes", dijo. Desde ese momento en adelante, los niños no recibieron más la protección que merecen. Los comerciales tomaron cada vez mayor cantidad de tiempo en los programas y eventualmente, dieron nacimiento a lo que se llama gentilmente el "comercial programa"; programas que son desarrollados por los fabricantes de juguetes, y publicistas. "Strawberry Shortcake", "Transformers", "He-Man", y "My Little Pony" eran todos programas concebidos, no con la idea de divertir a los niños o de educarlos, sino con el único proposito de convencer a los niños de comprar productos.

Los niños pequenos son particularmente susceptibles a los efectos de los medios de comunicación.
Antes de la edad de alrededor los seis años, los niños son incapaces de comprender la diferencia entre la realidad y la fantasía. Los niños de edad pre escolar habitan un mundo mágico, único, y muy diferente del mundo de los adultos, los adolescentes, o hasta de niños mayores. Los pre escolares creen

en Santa Claus y en el Hada del Diente. Piaget, quien se paso una vida estudiando las maneras en que los niños piensan, identifica a los pre escolares como estando en la etapa preoperacional del pensar. Pensar en esta etapa es en negro y blanco, egocéntrico, y muy concreto. Para un pre escolar "lo que se ve es lo que se obtiene", y ninguna cantidad de explicaciones convencerá a un niño pequeño que lo que el o ella ven es "solo fantasía".

Por estas razones, la mayoría de los padres instintivamente saben que los programas y las películas para pre-escolares necesitan ser benignas y no amenazantes. Por supuesto, ningún niño razonablemente saludable va a ser irreparablemente dañado por ver ocasionalmente un programa de televisión o una película inapropiada, sin embargo, tales experiencias son perturbadoras e innecesarias. Mientras los niños mayores pueden ser tranquilizados con un "No te preocupes, querido, es solo una película", tales palabras no tienen significado para un pre escolar.

Los niños pequeños están ocupados desarrollando un sentido de si mismos. Este sentido de si mismos es generado mas fácilmente cuando el mundo alrededor de ellos se siente predecible y seguro. Los niños pequeños son pobremente servidos por experiencias que hacen que el mundo se sienta como un lugar peligroso. Exponer a los niños a programas de televisión y películas que traumatizan, finalmente los hace temerosos y menos capaces.

Los Niños y la Violencia en la TV

Cuarenta años de investigaciones han mostrado consistentemente que los niños que miran mucha televisión son más miedosos, más agresivos, más insensibilizados a la violencia, y menos creativos que sus contrapartes que ven menos televisión. Los padres y los profesores están cada vez más conscientes de que sus niños tienen problemas de atención, mientras parecen creer que la interacción personal consiste principalmente en dar golpes de kárate acompañados de gritos de "¡hiya-a-a-a!", y están menos interesados en participar activamente en todo, desde los deportes a simplemente jugar con los amigos.

Esto no es para decir que toda la televisión es mala para los niños. De hecho, hay un número de programas de televisión que son divertidos, saludables, y educativos. Se puede contar con que PBS, Nickelodeon y el Canal Disney van a producir programas que son apropiados y frecuentemente educativos para los pre escolares. Los favoritos perennes como el "Vecindario de Mr. Rogers", "Calle Sesamo", "Lambchop Play-along", y "Barney y sus amigos" reciben notas altas de los padres, los niños y profesionales. El "Vecindario de Mr. Rogers", en particular, que ha deleitado a niños por dos generaciones, muestra que es posible ser divertido, tranquilizador y útil a los niños.

Los padres, sin embargo, deben ser cada vez más activos en clasificar los centenares de programas que existen y encontrar esos que son verdaderamente útiles para sus niños. Debemos familiarizarnos con lo que nuestros niños ven. Después de todo, para cuando un niño se gradúa de la escuela superior, el o ella habrán pasado un 50% mas de tiempo frente a una pantalla de televisión que frente a un profesor.

Vea Televisión Con Su Niño

Los niños cuyos padres miran televisión con ellos comprenden más sobre lo que ven. Ver juntos provee la oportunidad para discutir lo que sucede. Ya sea ante acciones agresivas, cereales inservibles, o comerciales engañosos. Comentarios como "Me pregunto si no habría otra manera de resolver eso en vez de peler" o "Esos juguetes se ven tan bien, pero, recuerdas cuando tuviste uno y se te rompió casi de inmediato?" ayuda a los niños a comenzar a pensar críticamente sobre lo que ven. Es esta capacidad, la de considerar los medios de comunicación con una actitud crítica, de comprender sus subtextos y predisposiciones, que es la base para ser un consumidor competente de los medios de comunicación. Sin esta comprensión, a nuestros niños se les esta continuamente "vendiendo una mentira". Le están diciendo que productos inútiles son necesarios para su felicidad personal, y que resolviendo los conflictos interpersonales con la violencia es una solución aceptable. Estos no son el tipo de lecciones que la mayoría de los padres quieren enseñarle a sus niños. Cuando todo esta dicho y hecho, los padres todavía somos la mayor influencia sobre nuestros niños mientras crezcan. Es imperioso que mantengamos nuestra influencia evitando aquellos programas que están en conflicto con nuestros valores, y alentar esos que promocionan el desarrollo saludable del niño

Consejos Para Los Padres

1. Vea televisión con su niño.
2. Ponga a sus niños en una dieta de televisión. La Academia Americana de Pediatría recomienda que los niños sean restringidos a dos horas al día o menos.
3. Enseñe a los niños a mirar con un proposito. El interminable cambiar de canales es la manera más segura de embotar la mente de un niño.
4. Fomente la lectura. La lectura es aun la mejor manera para fomentar la imaginación, la creatividad y la reflexión.
5. Use su poder económico. Una sola carta es considerada como representativa de mil voces.
6. Pídale a la escuela de su niño que haga programas de "alfabetismo" sobre los medios de comunicación.

Violence Affe Madeline Levine, Ph.D. es autora de "Viewing Violence: How Media cts Your Child's and Adolescent's Development (Doubleday)"; (Mirando Violencia: Como la violencia en los medios de comunicación afecta el desarrollo de su niño y de los adolescentes). Ella es frecuente participante en conferencias sobre el tema de la violencia en los medios de comunicación y del desarrollo de niños y de adolescentes. La Dra. Levine vive en Kentfield, California, con su esposo y tres hijos.

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Pp
Parent and preschooler

Newsletter

A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics from
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Volume 12, Number 5 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — May - 1997

Monday morning typically means madness in the Taylor household, but this Monday morning was even worse. Susan left for work as usual at 5:30 a.m., but she forgot to reset the alarm. Her husband Paul woke up an hour late and still had to shower, dress, wake their two boys, get them dressed, prepare and eat breakfast, brush teeth, get one kid on the school bus, and take the other to nursery school.

When Paul jumped into the shower, he discovered that the hot water heater wasn't working. He called the serviceman who said he couldn't come until the next day. When he woke the boys, his youngest son, Kenny, complained he had a stomach ache. Paul tried to comfort him, while at the same time helping him get dressed, hoping that Kenny would feel better after breakfast.

In the middle of breakfast, Kenny spilled his milk on the floor. Although Paul felt himself losing control, he held his temper, cleaned up, helped the kids brush their teeth, and put on their coats.

Since the school bus had already come and gone, Paul drove Eric to school, then took Kenny to day care. By the time he arrived at work, he was 45 minutes late and his stomach was tied in knots.

Stress is inevitable.

Paul Taylor's morning may not be typical, but it isn't all that unusual either. Stress can, and does, come from many different sources; sick children, unexpected events (both good and bad), even a pile up of "little" hassles.

All major life events are stressful. We know that unpleasant events can cause problems, but even positive events can be stressful because they require us to change and adapt. A promotion brings prestige, greater authority, and a substantial salary increase. But it can also mean changing the way a person relates to coworkers, longer hours, and less time for family and children. A new baby is a wonderful event, but babies require parents to readjust every area of their lives. If there are siblings, then there are issues of sibling rivalry (See *When Push Comes to Shove: Understanding and Reducing Sibling Rivalry*; February, 1997).

Even the daily strains of living can cause pressure. Sitting in rush hour traffic for a couple of hours, dealing with cranky children, trying to pay bills and finding there's not enough money in the checking account, can all trigger our temper.

Other stress comes from our different roles. Being a parent is a hard job, but we may also have other family obligations, demands from a job, or from being a part-time student. We need to work late, but there's an event at our child's school. A family member is ill and we have to cancel plans to take the children to an amusement park.

So, everyone has to cope with problems. It is the way we cope which is crucial. Regardless of whether there is a crisis or an everyday situation, there are some steps you can take to cope more effectively.

The Three-Step Solution

Good coping techniques enable us to adapt to, and regain control of, a stressful situation. Actions which isolate and alienate us from friends and family often make a bad situation even worse. Instead, use a step-by-step approach to create constructive solutions.

I - Become aware that you are under stress

Know the physical, emotional, and behavioral warning signs. You may have an upset stomach or a headache. You may feel angry or lonely. You may procrastinate, putting off not only tasks and chores, but also pleasurable activities like being with friends or pursuing hobbies. Some people can't sleep or they lose their appetite. Parents can experience burnout, losing interest in children's activities, yelling and screaming, or withdrawing from family life.

II - Identify and clarify stressors

Try to determine what is triggering the reaction. Ask yourself, "Why am I stressed out?" It's not enough to treat symptoms -- effective coping involves solving the problems that cause stress.

III - Brainstorm ideas and develop a plan of action

Once you know what is causing the problem, you can generate and implement solutions.

Joesph is very upset about his father's terminal illness. Unfortunately, there is little he can do about it. He has spoken to the doctors and made arrangements for medical care. But he is still afraid that his father will suffer, and worried that he cannot spend enough time with him.

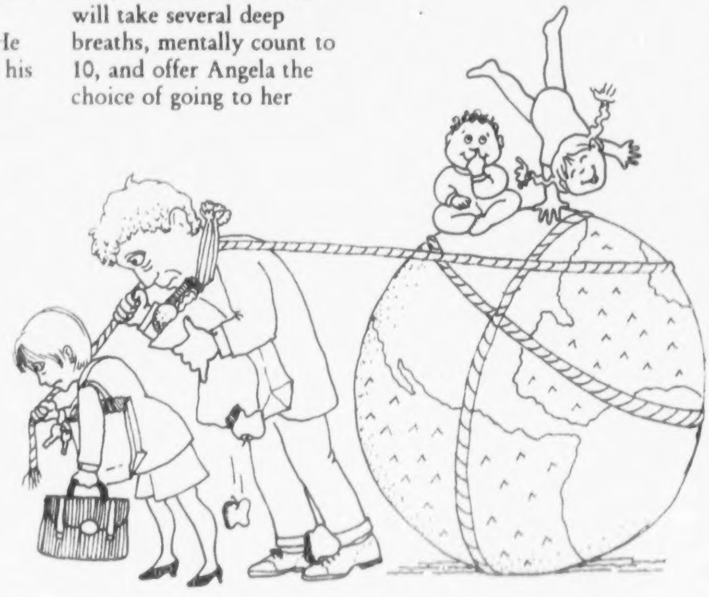
Joseph can't control his father's illness, but he can control how he spends his remaining time with his father. Joseph decides to adjust his work hours so he can spend more time each day with his father, and take his children to see their grandfather more often. He also decides to talk about his feelings about his father's illness with his wife and his friends so that he doesn't feel so isolated.

Parents sometimes experience daily stressors like uncooperative children, unending household chores, and changing schedules which require juggling; it is not only crises that cause stress.

Lisa is the mother of Angela, a highly-active three-year-old whose behavior is driving her crazy. Lisa hates when she yells and screams at Angela, and it doesn't even work – Angela only gets upset and cries.

Before Lisa can cope effectively, she has to clarify what is the real problem: her behavior (yelling and screaming), or her toddler's behavior (too active and not complying).

Lisa decides that there are several problems, but she first wants to work on her own behavior. She identifies a space where her daughter can play actively and safely. When Angela starts running around outside of that "safe" area, Lisa has decided she will take several deep breaths, mentally count to 10, and offer Angela the choice of going to her special area, or playing quietly with several toys or activities which Lisa will suggest.



Dennis faces another kind of problem. He works full time as an office manager and must be at work by 8:30 a.m to open the office. Every morning is difficult as he tries to get his two-year-old ready for day care and himself ready for work. Why is this a problem? His two-year-old does what two-year-olds often do – he dawdles.

Dennis has to ask himself two questions: "Is this really a problem?" and "What can I do about it?" Dennis decides that the real issue is that he will be late for work. While a parent may not be able to do much about a child's dawdling behavior (rushing, pleading and yelling rarely helps), parents can make other constructive changes. In this case, Dennis decides to get up a half hour earlier, so that he is dressed and ready to go when his son awakens. He also adds an extra 10 minutes for "dawdle time" into his son's schedule, without mentioning this to his youngster.

Joseph, Lisa, and Dennis all experienced stress from very different sources, yet the same technique worked for all: recognize you are under stress; identify specific problems; and develop a plan of action. It is important to remember that indecision is also a stressor. The longer a situation remains unresolved, the more stress it causes.

When stress strikes, and it will, we need to be prepared to cope effectively. Life in general, and parenting in particular, will never be stress-free, but we can learn how to cope more effectively to stay healthy, solve problems, strengthen relationships, and improve the quality of family life.

Timothy Jahn, M.Ed. is an Extension Educator specializing in human development at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, New York. He is the father of two boys, ages 3 and 9.

Antidotes for Stress

✦ **Build a support network of family and friends**. Isolation and alienation can increase stress and lead to burnout. Join a parent group or attend parent workshops. If nothing else, you'll feel better when you learn that others also struggle with the job of parenting.

✦ **Talk about the problem**. When you discuss a problem with someone who really listens, you will find yourself clarifying your perceptions and feelings. Sometimes, others have experienced the same problem and can offer suggestions. It is particularly important for mothers and fathers to ask each other for help - their cooperation sends a powerful message to others in the family. We are a family and we work together.

✦ **Give yourself personal time**. Everyone needs time and space to pursue personal goals, even parents. Try to find small and big blocks of time to relax, and be involved in your own interests. It can be early in the morning, when kids are napping, at school, or when everyone's asleep. Listen to your favorite music; read a good book. Take a break during the day and go out to lunch with a friend, or take a brisk walk.

✦ **Take care of your health**. Fatigue, caffeine, smoking, alcohol, and overeating can all increase the intensity of your stress and your stress symptoms. Reduce coffee, tea, cola and chocolate, which are all sources of caffeine. Limit alcohol consumption. Eliminate smoking. Eat a variety of foods in a balanced diet. Exercise regularly. And finally, get sufficient sleep. Research shows that adults need at least 7-8 hours of sleep each night, and adults are chronically sleep-deprived.

✦ **Remember that nobody is perfect.** Avoid unrealistic expectations for yourself, your partner, and for your children.

Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus

Relaxing With Your Child

How can you mention relaxing and children in the same breathe? They are opposites. Even if you've been going all day and need a break, preschoolers don't want to relax. When they do, they usually just fall asleep. But don't despair, with some planning, parents and preschoolers can enjoy relaxing together.

- **When you are planning relaxing activities remember...**

1. Let them get out their energy. Preschoolers are much more likely to settle down to a quiet-time activity after they have been able to use some of their abundant energy. Put on some music and dance, or put on a children's exercise tape and tone up together. Or take the children to the park or to a nearby school playground or track for some "run around" time". You can take a radio or cassette player for yourself. This way you can keep an eye on your child and an ear on your music.

2. The "right" time. Activities should follow a natural pattern, such as relaxing with a book right after a meal. This is the time to help food digest, not time for jumping which could cause an upset stomach. Be sensitive to these natural rhythms in sleeping, eating, activity and quiet times in your child's day to know when it's best to plan an activity.

3. Take personality into account. To me it is relaxing to cook, but not everyone agrees. Tammy, mother of three, loves playing games, so does her five-year-old daughter. Together they play "Go Fish", or "Clue, Jr.". Make a list of how each member in your family likes to relax and see how everyone matches up. If you like to paint, color, cut, and glue spend some time at the "art table". Projects can relate to seasons, holidays, stories or nature. Comment on your child's art work in a supportive way. Say, "Tell me about your picture," rather than, "What is that?" List the colors used in addition to saying that it's beautiful. Tell your child "You worked hard", rather than "You are mess".

You can also make a "nature placemat". Walk around the yard, the block or go to the park. Look for leaves, or for beautiful flowers (and remember to a child a dandelion is a flower). Bring a bag and carry home petals, grass that has gone to seed, and interesting leaves. When you go back inside, take two pieces of wax paper and place flat items in-between. Use a warm iron to seal and use it as a placemat.

4. If it's not happening, give it up. You can't force anyone to relax. They have to allow it to happen. If you begin an activity and your preschooler isn't cooperating, go on to something else. Gritting your teeth to "relax and enjoy" simply won't work. However you decide to relax with your child, plan to incorporate stress-reducing enjoyment time each day for some balance in your life.

Dear Reader

One of these days I'll have a stress-free life. My son will turn into the perfect child and my bills will be paid. My dog will behave and nothing in my house will require repair. Unfortunately, I don't think this will happen in the near future – for me, or anyone else I know. Stress just seems to be a part of life, and we need to learn how to cope with it. If we don't, it can ruin our health and our relationships.

Ever notice that you develop more illnesses when you are stressed out? Under conditions of chronic stress our immune system becomes compromised and our health suffers. We also become less nurturing and patient with our children and more critical of our spouses.

The key is not to grit our collective teeth, but to read Tim's Jahn's informative article and learn how to solve the problems which cause the stress. And don't forget our Library Resources section. We have rounded up a wonderful collection of children's books dealing with special, and sometimes stressful, situations. Susan Eaddy, who always provides our wonderful illustrations, has drawn a perfect depiction of parenting at the end of a long day. Take a deep breath, exhale, and have a good month. Neale Schwartzberg

Relaxation Time

One way to counteract the effects of too much stress is to learn to relax. Whether you call it meditation, centering, or a relaxation response, this basic technique quiets your mind and your body.

★ Find a quiet place. Initially, chose a calm place with few distractions.

★ Close your eyes and deeply relax all your muscles. Begin with your feet and toes, and work upward toward your face. Feel each muscle and let it relax.

★ Select a sound, word, or phrase on which to focus your attention. One technique is to use this word with your breathing. For example, breathe in, out, "one"; breathe in, out, "one", etc. When your mind wanders to thoughts and ideas, this sound restores your focus. Pay attention to the normal rhythm of breathing.

★ Develop a passive attitude. When distracting thoughts occur, brush them away. Having these thoughts is normal, but they are distracting.

★ Find a comfortable position. You don't want to be uncomfortable and find yourself thinking about how your leg is cramping, or your neck aches. If you lay down you may find yourself falling asleep. While sleeping is not a bad thing, it isn't the same as relaxing.

★ Try to do this for 10 to 20 minutes, twice a day. You can also use it when you feel yourself beginning to become stressed out or anxious; the technique produces a sense of calm and relaxation.

Adapted from The Relaxation Response by Herbert Benson, M.D. with Miriam Z. Klipper, Avon Books (paperback) 1975.

Library Resources

Children's Books for Special Life Situations

🕮 ***Baby Duck and the Bad Eyeglasses*** by Amy Hest; illustrated by Jill Barton; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1996. A sweet and endearing story about getting eyeglasses. Plucky Baby Duck doesn't want to wear glasses but learns from her kindly grandpa the importance of knowing that something you first think of as bad, can turn out to be wonderful.

🕮 ***Leon and Bob*** written and illustrated by Simon James; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1997. This is the story of Leon, the new kid in town, and his imaginary friend, Bob. Things turn out well in this charming book when Leon makes a real friend.

🕮 ***Noel The First*** by Kate McMullan; illustrated by Jim McMullan; HarperCollins; New York, NY; 1996. This is an important book about competition and the lesson that if you do something just for the love of it, that is all that really matters.

🕮 ***P.J. & Puppy*** written and illustrated by Cathryn Falwell; Clarion Books; New York, NY; 1997. A gentle and funny little book about toilet training. Both P.J. and the puppy are successful.

🕮 ***D.W. the Picky Eater*** written and illustrated by Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; New York, NY; 1995. D.W. is a very picky eater who misses out on lots of fun until she finally gets tired of being left at home with a sitter every time the family goes out for dinner. Soon she's even eating the dreaded spinach!

🕮 ***Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*** written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes; Greenwillow Books; New York, NY; 1996. This is a marvelous story about a little mouse named Lilly and the hard time she had when she received a lovely new purse. Her teacher helps her find a way to share her excitement without disturbing others. This is an entertaining and funny book with splendid illustrations.

🕮 ***Mommy's in the Hospital Having a Baby*** by Maxine B. Rosenberg; photographs by Robert Maass; Clarion Books; New York, NY; 1997. This informative and reassuring book answers questions that kids may have when their mom goes to the hospital to have a baby. It helps the entire family look forward to the new arrival.

🕮 ***Bad Baby Brother*** written and illustrated by Martha Weston; Clarion Books; New York, NY; 1997. This is a frolicsome and insightful telling of how a little girl learns to be a big sister. The illustrations are especially striking.

🕮 ***Gingerbread Days*** by Joyce Carol Thomas; illustrated by Floyd Cooper; HarperCollins Books; New York, NY; 1995. Illustrating each month with a vignette-like poem and drawing of emotional intensity, this book is a celebration of the simple things that make up a year in our lives. The author and illustrator are winners of the Coretta Scott King Author and Illustrator Honors.

🕮 ***Piggy Washes Up*** written and illustrated by Carol Thompson; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1997. A winsome depiction of bath time. An adorable little pig finds many things to do in the bathroom at bath time. In between weighing himself and brushing his teeth, he even manages to take a bath!

🕮 ***Digby*** by Barbara Shook Hazen; illustrated by Barbara J. Phillips-Duke; HarperCollins; New York, NY; 1997. This is a poignant story of a little boy who loves his aging dog, Digby, and wishes Digby could run and play with him. His big sister gently explains about age and change. The book is satisfying and useful in its intelligent dealing with this special subject.

🕮 ***Today is the Day*** by Nancy Riecken; illustrated by Catherine Stock; Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass.; 1996. When a father must leave home to find work, the whole family awaits his return. Families that are separated by circumstance will find much of value here. It is a nice description of the power of love and faith in the face of modern realities.

🕮 ***What's Wrong With Grandma?*** by Margaret Shawver; illustrated by Jeffrey K. Bagby; Prometheus Books; Amherst, NY; 1996. This sensitive book describes a young girl's realization that her grandmother has Alzheimer's disease and how her family grapples with the mental and emotional consequences of this disorder. Although written for the older child, there is much in this book which younger children will find helpful.

🕮 ***The Magpie Song*** by Laurence Anholt; Houghton, Mifflin Company; Boston, Mass.; 1996. This is a moving story about Carla who lives in the city and her grandfather who lives in the country. The book consists of their letters to each other until grandpa dies. It is a suitable book for helping children deal with loss.

✉ **For more information about loss and grief issues for children, send a stamped, self-addressed, # 10 envelope to: The Family Bereavement Program; NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Road; Roslyn Heights, N.Y. 11577-2215. Ask for the "Children and Grief" brochure.**

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
*North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center*
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
Editor
Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D
Layout and Design
Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour, BS
Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
Amy Houts
Illustrations
Susan Eaddy
Contributor
Sabrina J. Yazdpour
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and Preschooler
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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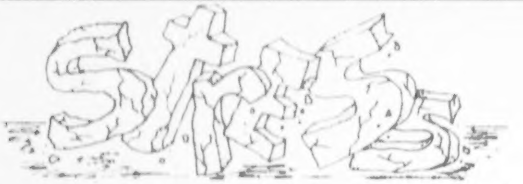
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

Volume 12, Number 5 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* May - 1997



El Estrés

La mañana del lunes es típicamente una locura en el hogar de los Taylor, pero este lunes fue mucho peor. Susan salio para su trabajo como de costumbre a las 5:30 a.m., pero se le olvidó poner de nuevo la alarma. Su esposo, Paul, se despertó una hora más tarde y todavía tenía que ducharse, vestirse, despertar a sus dos niños, hacerlos vestirse, preparar y tomar desayuno, cepillarse los dientes, poner a uno de los niños en el bus de la escuela, y llevar al otro a la preescuela.

Cuando Paul se metió a la ducha, descubrió que el calentador de agua no funcionaba. Llamó al servicio de reparaciones donde le dijeron que no podrían ir hasta el día siguiente. Cuando despertó a los muchachos, su hijo menor, Kenny, se quejó de que tenía dolor de estómago. Paul trató de reconfortarlo, al mismo tiempo que lo ayudaba a vestirse, esperando que Kenny se sintiera mejor después del desayuno.

En medio del desayuno, Kenny derramó su leche sobre el piso. Aunque Paul se sintió como que estaba perdiendo el control, se contuvo, limpió el desparramo, ayudó a los niños a cepillarse los dientes, y les puso sus abrigos.

Como el bus de la escuela ya había pasado, Paul llevó a Eric a la escuela, y luego llevó a Kenny a la guardería infantil. Cuando llegó a su trabajo, Paul andaba 45 minutos atrasado y su estómago estaba hecho un nudo.

El estrés es inevitable.

La mañana de Paul Taylor puede no ser típica, pero no es totalmente inusitada tampoco. El estrés puede venir, y viene, de muchas fuentes diferentes; niños enfermos, eventos inesperados (tanto buenos como malos), hasta de un montón de confusiones "pequeñas". Todo los eventos importantes de la vida son estresantes. Sabemos que los eventos desagradables pueden ocasionar problemas, pero hasta los eventos positivos pueden ser estresantes porque nos requieren cambiar y adaptarnos. Una promoción trae prestigio, mayor autoridad y un considerable aumento de salario. Pero también puede significar cambiar la manera en que la persona se relaciona con sus colegas, horas mas largas de trabajo, y menos tiempo para la familia y los niños. Un nuevo bebé es un evento maravilloso, pero requiere que los padres reajusten todas las áreas de sus vidas. Si hay hermanos, entonces hay cuestiones de rivalidad entre hermanos (ver "Como Entender y Disminuir la Rivalidad Entre Hermanos"; Febrero de 1997).

Hasta las tensiones del diario vivir pueden causar presión. Sentarse en tráfico a la hora de mayor afluencia de vehículos por un par de horas, lidiar con niños caprichosos, tratar de pagar cuentas y encontrar que no hay dinero suficiente en la cuenta bancaria, todas estas cosas pueden provocar una explosión de mal genio.

Otras clases de estrés pueden resultar de nuestros diferentes roles. Ser padre o madre es un trabajo duro, pero también puede que tengamos otras obligaciones familiares, exigencias del trabajo, o ser estudiantes de tiempo parcial. Necesitamos trabajar tarde, pero hay un evento en la escuela de nuestro niño en el que nos gustaría participar. Un miembro de la familia cae enfermo y tenemos que cancelar los planes de llevar a los niños al parque de diversiones.

O sea, todos tenemos que dar abasto con problemas. Lo que es crucial es la manera de manejar estas presiones. Ya sea que se trate de una crisis o una situación cotidiana, hay algunos pasos que se pueden tomar para manejarlas mas constructivamente.

La Solución de Tres Pasos

Una buena técnica para manejar situaciones estresantes nos permitirá adaptarnos y recobrar el control. Las acciones que nos aíslan y nos alienan de nuestras amistades y familiares frecuentemente hacen peor una mala situación. En vez de esto, use un enfoque de paso a paso para crear soluciones constructivas.

I Adquiera consciencia de que está con estrés

Conozca las señales de advertencia físicas, emocionales y de conducta, del estrés. Puede que tenga una molestia estomacal o un dolor de cabeza. Puede sentirse malhumorado o abandonado. Puede estar contemporizando, postergando no solo tareas y

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obligaciones, sino que también actividades placenteras como estar con amistades o dedicarse a sus aficiones. Algunas personas no pueden dormir o pierden el apetito. Los padres pueden sentirse agobiados, perdiendo interés en las actividades de sus niños, gritando y vociferando, o aislándose de la familia.

II Identifique y clarifique los elementos que causan estrés

Intente determinar lo que provoca la reacción de estrés. Pregúntese a si mismo, "Por que estoy estresado?" No es suficiente tratar los síntomas -- una solución efectiva involucra resolver los problemas que causan estrés.

III Discurra ideas y desarrolle un plan de acción

Una vez que sepa lo que ocasiona el problema, puede generar e implementar soluciones. José se siente muy agobiado por la enfermedad terminal de su padre. Desafortunadamente, hay poco que el puede hacer al respecto. Ha hablado con los doctores y ha hecho arreglos para su atención médica. Pero todavía teme que su padre sufrirá, y se preocupa de que no puede pasar suficiente tiempo con el.

José no puede controlar la enfermedad de su padre, pero si puede controlar como pasa con su padre el tiempo que le queda. José decide ajustar sus horas de trabajo de manera que cada día pueda pasar mas tiempo con su padre, y llevar a sus niños a ver a su abuelo mas frecuentemente. También decide hablar sobre sus sentimientos con respecto a la enfermedad de su padre con su esposa y sus amigos, de modo de no sentirse tan aislado.

A veces los padres se enfrentan a diario con cuestiones que causan estrés, tal como niños que no cooperan, una infinidad de tareas familiares, y programas cambiantes que requieren un reajuste; no son solamente las crisis lo que causa estrés.

Lisa es la madre de Angela, un niña de tres que es extremadamente activa y cuyo comportamiento la vuelve loca. Lisa detesta cuando le grita y le vocifera a Angela, y ademas esto no funciona -- Angela solo se trastorna y se pone a llorar.

Antes que Lisa pueda lidiar mas efectivamente con el estrés, ella tiene que aclarar cual es el verdadero problema: su comportamiento (gritar y vociferar), o el comportamiento de la niña (demasiado activa y poco obediente).

Lisa decide que hay varios problemas, pero primero quiere mejorar su propio comportamiento. Identifica un espacio donde su hija puede jugar activamente y sin riesgo. Cuando Angela eche a correr afuera del área "segura", Lisa ha decidido que respirará profundamente varias veces, contando mentalmente hasta 10, y le dará a Angela la elección de ir a su área especial, o jugar sosegadamente con varios juguetes o actividades que Lisa le sugerirá.

Dennis encara otro tipo de problema. Trabaja tiempo completo como gerente en una oficina y debe estar en el trabajo a las 8:30 A.M. para abrirla. Las mañanas son difíciles. Mientras trata de que su hijo de dos años esté listo para la guardería y el mismo, listo para el trabajo. Por que es esto un problema? Su niño hace lo que cualquier niño de su edad hace frecuentemente -- demora.

Dennis tiene que hacerse a si mismo dos preguntas: "Es esto realmente un problema?" y, "Que puedo hacer yo al respecto?" Dennis decide que lo verdaderamente importante es que llegará tarde a su trabajo. Mientras un padre puede no ser capaz de hacer mucho con respecto a las demoras de un niño (apresurarse, rogar, y gritar rara vez ayuda), los padres pueden hacer otros cambios mas constructivos. En este caso, Dennis decide levantarse media hora mas temprano, de manera que esta vestido y listo para salir para cuando su hijo se despierta. También le agrega 10 minutos extra de "tiempo para demoras" al programa de su hijo, sin mencionarselo a él.

Tanto José, Lisa, y Dennis sufren de estrés, el que viene de fuentes muy diferentes, y sin embargo la misma técnica funciona para todos: reconocer que se tiene estrés; identificar los problemas específicos; y desarrollar un plan de acción. Es importante recordar que la indecisión es también un elemento que causa estrés. Cuanto mas tiempo siga sin resolverse una situación, mas estrés ocasiona. Cuando ataca el estrés, y con seguridad lo hará, necesitamos estar preparados para lidiar con este efectivamente. La vida en general, y el ser padres en particular, nunca estará libre de estrés, pero podemos aprender a lidiar con el estrés mas efectivamente y así mantener la salud, resolver los problemas, fortalecer las relaciones, y mejorar la calidad de vida de la familia.

Los Antídotos Para el Estrés

Construya una red de apoyo de familiares y amistades. El aislamiento y la alienación pueden aumentar el estrés y llevar al agotamiento. Unase a un grupo de padres o asista a cursos de como ser madre o padre. Por lo menos se sentirá mejor cuando vea que otros padres también pugnan con el trabajo de ser padres.

Hable del problema. Cuando uno discute un problema con alguien que realmente escucha, uno puede aclarar percepciones y sentimientos. A veces, otros han experimentado el mismo problema y pueden ofrecer sugerencias. Es particularmente importante que las madres y los padres se pidan ayuda el uno al otro; su mutua cooperación da un poderoso mensaje a los demás miembros de la familia. Nosotros somos una familia y trabajamos juntos.

Dése a si mismo tiempo personal. Todos necesitan tiempo y espacio para perseguir metas personales, hasta los padres. Trate de encontrar espacios de tiempo grandes y pequeños para relajarse, y dedicarse a sus propios intereses. Puede ser temprano en la mañana, cuando los niños duermen o están en la escuela, o cuando todos duermen. Escuche su música favorita; lea un buen libro. Tómese un tiempo durante el día y salga a almorzar con un amigo o una amiga, o salga a dar una caminata con brío.

Cuide su salud. El agotamiento, la cafeína, el fumar, el alcohol y comer demasiado, todos estos hábitos pueden aumentar la intensidad y los síntomas del estrés. Reduzca el café, el té, las bebidas gaseosas y el chocolate, y todas las fuentes de cafeína. Limite el consumo de alcohol. Deje de fumar. Coma una variedad de alimentos en una dieta equilibrada. Haga ejercicio regularmente. Finalmente, duerma suficiente. Las investigaciones muestran que los adultos necesitan por lo menos 7-8 horas de buen dormir cada noche, y los adultos están crónicamente deprivados de descanso.

Recuerde que nadie es perfecto. Evite las expectativas poco realistas para si mismo, para su pareja, y para sus niños.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 12, Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* June - 1997

FROM THE PARENTING FRONT LINES

or *Why Is There A Tuna Fish Sandwich In My Shoe?*

Someone once said that life is what happens while you're making plans. Perhaps being a parent is something like that. Parenting is what happens when we're finding out how to be the "right" kind of parent. Once our child is here, we're parents - ready or not!

There have been many theories and much advice put forth in the last fifty years to help us become "good" parents with happy and successful children. With all of this information has also come the dilemma of which advice to follow. We need to stay in charge of our home, help our kids make the best choices, and live by the morals and values in which we believe. We need to be able to do all of this every moment, every day, in between making the tuna fish sandwiches, working at our job, doing the laundry, helping with homework, re-finishing the basement, and trying desperately to find one hour to simply read a good book or go to a movie.

It is no wonder that we are often overwhelmed, overpowered, and overcome. The fact of the matter is, however, that most of us manage to be in charge enough of the time to provide a positive space in which our children can develop, grow, and even flourish. We need to provide children with a safe, space, a "comfort zone", where they can explore and challenge but are still protected and secure. We know that, ironically, we are probably most successful at parenting when we help our children to become strong enough to separate from us.

So what can we, as parents, do to help our children become strong and brave but also safe? First and foremost, it is important for us to connect with our children in a "real" way. We can not be real with our children if we are operating under unreal circumstances. We cannot listen to our own instincts if we have been taught that these instincts are flawed. With the outpouring of knowledge in our time, has come some common myths about being a parent. These myths seem to create more stumbling blocks than they help to relieve. So for just a moment or two, let's explore some of these most popular and significant myths and see how they may be blocking us from being empathic and effective parents.

The Myth of the Overinvolved Mother and the Underinvolved Father

Ideas about mother's overprotectivness and father's indifference abound in our culture. As parents they hamper and frustrate us.

A nursery school teacher once described a little girl whose mother would drop her off at school every morning and for the first hour, stand in the grass outside of the school room window so that her daughter, who was shy and afraid of school, could see that her mother had not left her. This lasted for almost two months. Overinvolved? Overprotective? Or was this mother simply concerned that her daughter not feel abandoned, and so made a choice that seemed strange to others?

A child's natural and healthy need to be connected and take nurturing from his mother is only now being realized once more. Mothers need to recognize this and know that the instinct to protect and sustain their child is not only natural but is also right and good.

As much anguish as mothers have felt in their stereotyping as "overinvolved", so too have fathers become inundated with guilt and anguish about their portrayal as cold, shallow, underinvolved parents. Too many ill-

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informed, so-called experts have ignored and denigrated the role of father. Men were assumed to have little desire or capacity to be with, to nourish, or to care for their children. A man's place was to provide financial support, play "catch" with his son once a month, and attend his daughter's dance recital every spring. This is, in fact, just not so.

Men can provide positive, loving, nurturing experiences for their children and themselves.

Jeff was a graduate student while his wife was pregnant and working. It was financially necessary that his wife return to work very soon after giving birth. They explored different child care options but none seemed satisfactory. Then Jeff decided that he would change his school schedule. He would care for their daughter during the day and attend school during the evening. For three years this was how it worked and it worked well. Jeff "fell in love" with his child and with himself as "father". His wife felt guilt-free returning to work so quickly. Although Jeff had to spend an extra year in school to accommodate the night class schedule, the benefits of this arrangement were astounding, making this family able to communicate on a very deep and personal level. Their daughter, feeling secure in the connection she had to both parents, has flourished.

Today's parents need to know that they, and their children, can gain from parents who trust their own feelings. A father who genuinely communicates his esteem and affection to his children, a mother who honestly allows herself to "mother" will benefit their children in ways they can not even imagine, but that will become evident with each new challenge their child successfully handles. The need for a clear and sincere connection between parent and child begins at birth and never seems to end. The unfulfilled need for these connections leave our child with what Dr. Geneen Roth calls a "hungry heart". If we do not hold our children close to us, we can never help them to let go and they can never really grow up.

The Myth of "Between You and Your Child"

One of the most famous and significant myths about child rearing is that what you - and you alone - do with your child is all that matters. If there were no other family member or family history, perhaps this would be valid. Families are, however, very complex, interconnected social systems. What you say and do with your child (just the two of you) is still colored by the family system in which you live.

No one in a family system is ever totally apart or alone. Nothing really separates family members. A family is just like an environmental system in which, when one element is missing or changed, the whole is forever changed.

Mel and his son, Charlie, were often at odds with each other. Their temperaments couldn't be more different. Mel is laid back, open to spontaneous events, and very unassuming. His son, Charlie, aged six, has a very evident need to be organized, strong, and in control. Because they are so different, they have difficulties relating to each other in positive ways. Mel's daughter, Miranda, finds her father's openness and spontaneity wonderful and she spends a lot of time with him. Sue, the wife and mother, is easy-going and also likes things "mellow".

When Charlie's school held a "father and son" day, Charlie discovered new things about his father that he hadn't suspected; his father's warmth, good humor, and fun-loving nature made him popular with all of Charlie's friends. Charlie impressed his father with his leadership qualities and organizational abilities, emerging gracefully, throughout the day, as the natural leader of every group of which he was a part. This day created an opening for communication between father and son, based on positive qualities mutually discovered, that continues to the present. This was a positive and wonderful development and yet it fundamentally changed the functioning of this family. Miranda no longer had her father's undivided attention and she sometimes resented it. Even though something positive happened, the family still needed to help Miranda accept the new closeness between her brother and father.

Whatever happens in a family, happens to everyone in that family.

The Myth of Parenting Without Faith

This is one of the most important ideas we will ever face as parents and heads of families. Children need to have some framework of morality and values in which to live their lives. Parents who have faith and a belief system as a part of their lives are more likely to raise children who will be able to survive the hard things that life sometimes has to offer. Parents, who themselves live within a framework of faith, talk to their children about morality in an easy way. They are comfortable in asking children to make sacrifices when these sacrifices are needed and they are able to explore and answer the difficult questions children sometimes ask.

Rituals, very much a part of the complexion and fabric of family life, are one important way parents can help children feel secure and good about themselves.

In addition to the rich religious rituals and traditions a family may have, there are unique and special rituals we create with our family.

Something as simple as a regular family Friday night of pajamas, pizza, and a rented movie or every-Sunday-morning pancakes, can make a great difference in the way a family relates to each other and to the world in general.

Teaching kids that charity and helping others is very much within their grasp is another way in which parents help their children feel empowered and good about themselves.

Ginger was a five-year-old Brownie Scout who helped her troop collect food for the homeless on Thanksgiving. Her family was very near to being destitute, yet Ginger worked the hardest of all during the food collection. When asked why she had worked so hard she replied "well, my mom and dad said it's important to help people who don't have as much as we do." This very poor and struggling family, through their faith and dignity, had made their child feel "rich" and contented in her life.

Parents who have strong beliefs provide their children with the best of all possible "safe spaces." These parents contribute a warmhearted, sheltered place for children to grow - a space filled with sweet rituals that provide connection and memories; charitable thoughts and deeds that allow kids to understand that the entire world is connected and that often by helping others, we also help ourselves; ethical behavior that means things like money and position should only be obtained without harming others; and finally, that there is the possibility in this world for love and kindness beyond our imagining.

Parents need to remember that, although they may sometimes be distracted by stress or other difficulties, their instincts are good; that they should only listen to what people tell them, when it feels right; that they should listen to their own inner voice and know that it is very often correct. For those times in which we just don't have an answer, go to places or people you trust to talk about solutions. Talk to counselors, clergy, teachers, close friends, family, but, most important of all, listen to your own hearts. ♥

Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour is a freelance writer and staffer at Parent and preschooler Newsletter. This article is an adaptation of *Parenting by Heart* *by Dr. Ron Taffel with Melinda Blau; published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., (paperback) 1993.*

The Doctor's Corner

Toilet Training:

Supporting Your Child's Drive Toward Mastery

Most children delight in developmental accomplishment. They eagerly master motor, linguistic and social skills. However, in today's competitive environment there is great temptation to hurry children to the next milestone. This race towards mastery may serve a parent's agenda, but it ignores the natural rhythmic unfolding that is unique to each child.

Toilet training is a truly great stride. It marks the end of babyhood and the emergence of the child into greater independence and autonomy. Most parents anxiously, even zealously anticipate "Independence Day" -- the day when diapers are relegated to historical interest only. But getting to this point is a process; frequently one of starts and setbacks. Remember that sensitive, child-centered parenting will enable your child to comfortably attain control of his bowel movements and prevent later parent-child conflict or incontinence.

✦ Signs of Readiness

Children display several signs which let parents know that the time is right to begin training. In the motor realm, most children will be walking well before training. They also need enough language to express their desire to go to the potty, and a consciousness that a dirty diaper is uncomfortable. In addition, you will notice longer time periods between wet diapers.

When you recognize these signs (usually between 18 and 24 months of age) it is time to introduce the potty chair. This part is very important. The potty chair should belong to your child and represent a safe and secure place. You can help your child feel comfortable on the chair by making sure it suits your child's size; her feet should reach the ground. Her first visits are typically fully clothed, perhaps for a story, or just to sit in a

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DEAR READER...

I feel a true affinity for the topic of this month's feature on parenting myths, particularly the myth of the overinvolved mother. When my son was three-years-old we enrolled him in the "big" nursery school; the one where the bus would come and pick him up. The bus trip scared him. I could have argued, but I didn't. I understood how scary it might be for a little guy to go on a bus for the first time. So, we made a deal. He would get on the bus, and I would follow him all the way to nursery school. When the big day came, he got on the bus and I got into my car. Up and down the streets of the community went the yellow school bus, followed by the mother-driven blue car. Periodically throughout the trip my son would turn and wave. I would wave back. When we got to the school my son got off the bus, confidently gave me a final nod, and went into school. Had he wanted it, I would have followed him the next day, and the day after that. The reason? Caring, sensitive, involved parenting produces confident children.

Speaking of parenting, as of January, 1997, **North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center**, the leading children's mental health center on Long Island, became the "parents" of ***Parent & preschooler Newsletter***. It has been a hectic few months but now that we've caught our breath, let us introduce ourselves. I'm **Neala Schwartzberg**, the editor, and mother of that boy now semi-grown. I have a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology and believe that there is no greater thrill than helping a child grow up to be a caring, competent adult. I am honored to be working with **Sandy Wolkoff, CSW**, our Managing Editor and the Director of the Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute; she is the mother of three terrific children. Her vision and hard work infuse every issue of the newsletter. We are joined by **Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour**, the Public Information Officer at NSC&FGC, and a freelance writer. Jane seems to do just about everything for the newsletter from subscriptions to layout. Finally, there is Jane's wonderful daughter **Sabrina Yazdpour** who writes the reviews for the Library Resources section. Multi-talented, Sabrina is pursuing a degree in aerospace engineering. There are two familiar names still on our masthead, **Amy Houts** and **Susan Eaddy**. Amy continues to provide her warm and wonderful Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS, and Susan's clever and thought-provoking illustrations still grace our pages.

So, that's our family. We're honored that you have invited us to be a part of your life and your family.

Neala Schwartzberg

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➤ *Continued from The Doctor's Corner*

comfortable place. You can tell your child that this is the place to pee and poop when she wants to.

Control of urination typically occurs concurrently with control of stool, and control during the day almost always comes before control at night. The question "Do you want to go to the potty?" should be posed after meals; a phenomenon known as the gastrocolic reflex tends to induce evacuation at this time. Don't try to "catch" your child about to defecate. Your child must be an active participant in this process for success to last.

✦ **Never make toilet training a power struggle.** Desperate pleas or coercion do not facilitate success. In the battle of the bowels, there is no winner and the process of training is prolonged. When your child voluntarily uses the potty be genuinely happy and show it. In addition, you can offer your child the opportunity to select special underwear to be worn when consistent continence is attained. Placing a toddler who is not ready in underwear does not enhance the training process and may result in the humiliation of having to return to diapers.

Recognize that this milestone truly signals to your child the end of babyhood. Your child may not want this when you are ready for it. Children understand that many day care centers and nursery schools will not accept them prior to being potty trained. If you really want them in the center, but they are not ready to separate, they will not train!

An additional challenge to giving up babyhood is the arrival of a new sibling. Regression of developmental milestones frequently occurs in this setting. Toddlers are a bit confused when a new baby arrives in the household and may not want to take this step during this transition time.

Even after a child attains consistent control, accidents happen during times of illness or stress. Too much emphasis on accidents will draw attention to them and encourage them to persist, while a sensitive supportive environment will bring out your child's best efforts. When in doubt, consult your child's pediatrician. And remember...every child toilet trains. Have patience, and hope.

Dr. Ron Marino is the Director of General Pediatrics at Winthrop University Hospital and Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Long Island.

Resource Guide

SMALL TREASURES & LITTLE PLEASURES FOR CHILDREN

♪ ***The Planet Sleeps***; SONY Wonder and The Work Group at SONY Music Corporation, Inc.; New York, NY; 1996. This is a collection of music from 16 different countries that "is meant to bring bliss into a frantic world". It succeeds beyond all expectations. Available on cassette and CD (which is enchanced with CD-ROM multi-media). All versions come with a little booklet with lush graphics.

🕮 ***Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear***, Illustrated by Michael Hague; Tupelo Books; William, Morrow & Co.; New York, NY; 1997. This is a sweet illustration in book form of the classic action "jump rope" rhyme "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around...". A nice, tough board book.

🕮 ***The Caterpillow Fight***, by Sam McBratney; illustrated by Jill Barton; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1996. A bunch of baby caterpillars have a pillow fight. This book is one in a series of books called The Giggle Club which are designed to put humor into early reading experiences. It is a funny book with charming pictures.

🕮 ***Contrary Mary***, written and illustrated by Anita Jeram; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1997. This is another engaging book in The Giggle Club books series. *Contrary Mary* is about a cute little mouse who has a very contrary day. The pictures will steal your heart.

🕮 ***Under the Table***, written and illustrated by Marisabina Russo Stark; Greenwillow Books; New York, NY; 1997. A little girl finds a place to "hide", to dream, to be creative, and find out about how sweet it can be to just be by yourself. This intelligent book is a treasure for the entire family.

🕮 ***The Mice of Mousehole***, written and illustrated by Michelle Cartlidge; paper mechanics by Dave Browning and Martin Taylor; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1997. Children can travel through the seaside village of Mousehole. Using this movable picture book, children can lift the tabs and pull the flaps and make the village come alive.

🕮 ***Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter*** written and illustrated by Diane Stanley; Morrow Junior Books; New York, NY; 1997. Unique and funny text and zesty illustrations put a delightful new twist on the classic fairy tale. Parents and kids will both enjoy this delightful book.

▪ ***Learning to Share*** and ***Telling the Truth***; Sesame Street Kids Guide to Life; The Children's Television Workshop; New York, NY 1997. These two videos are from a series by the Children's Television Workshop. In the "Share" video we find television newswoman, Katie Couric joined by the wonderful Elmo. In "Truth" actor Dennis Quaid talks to Sesame Street character Telly. CTW does a superior job of making the "message" a pleasure. Each video comes with a little book too!

▪ ***Dance Along With the Daise Family*** and ***Sing Along With Eureeka***; "Nick, Jr."; Paramount Home Videos - Viacom; Hollywood, Ca.; 1996. These videos are great for helping kids release energy while learning basic lessons such as numbers. Good for young children, there is a lot of dancing and singing!

▪ ***Include Us***, TiffHill Productions, Inc.; Encino, Ca.; 1996; (888) 462-5833. While watching this video, kids will learn that everyone - no matter what their age, color, or ability - can live, learn, and be together. A good message for all.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 12, Number 6 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — June - 1997

DESDE EL FRENTE DE COMBATE DE SER PADRE

O ¿Por Qué Hay Un Emparedado De Atún En Mi Zapato?

Alguien dijo una vez que la vida es lo que sucede mientras uno hace planes. Quizás ser padre sea algo así. Ser padre es lo que sucede mientras estamos averiguando como ser padres "correctamente". Una vez que nuestro bebé ha llegado, ya somos padres, ¡estemos listos o no!

Ha habido muchas teorías y muchos consejos se han dado en los últimos cincuenta años para ayudarnos a ser "buenos" padres con niños felices y exitosos. Pero toda esta información ha traído también el dilema de que consejo seguir. Necesitamos seguir a cargo de nuestro hogar, ayudar a nuestros niños a hacer las mejores elecciones, y vivir de acuerdo a la moral y los valores en que creemos. Necesitamos ser capaces de hacer todo esto en cada momento, todos los días, entre medio de hacer los emparedados de atún, de trabajar en nuestra ocupación, lavar la ropa, ayudar con los deberes de la escuela, renovar el sótano, mientras tratamos desesperadamente de encontrar una hora para simplemente leer un buen libro o ir al cine.

No es de extrañar que frecuentemente nos sintamos abrumados, vencidos, y dominados. El hecho es, sin embargo, que la mayoría de nosotros se las arregla para estar suficientemente a cargo como para proveer un espacio positivo en el que nuestros niños se pueden desarrollar, crecer, y hasta florecer. Necesitamos proveerle a nuestros niños de un espacio seguro, de una "zona de bienestar", donde ellos pueden explorar y desafiar pero donde están protegidos y seguros. Sabemos que, irónicamente, probablemente somos más exitosos como padres cuando

ayudamos a nuestros niños a llegar a ser suficientemente fuertes como para poder separarse de nosotros.

¿Qué podemos, entonces, como padres, hacer para ayudar a nuestros niños a llegar a ser fuertes y audaces pero también seguros? Antes que nada, es importante conectarnos con nuestros niños de una manera "verdadera". No podemos ser verdaderos con nuestros niños si operamos bajo circunstancias irreales. No podemos escuchar a nuestros propios instintos si nos han enseñado que estos instintos son malos. Junto con la superabundancia de conocimientos de nuestro tiempo, han llegado también algunos mitos comunes sobre el ser padre. Estos mitos parecen crear más obstáculos que los que ayudan a superar. Exploremos algunos de estos mitos más populares y notorios por un momento o dos, y veamos como ellos podrían estar impidiéndonos ser padres cariñosos y efectivos.

El Mito de la Madre Demasiado Involucrada y del Padre Demasiado Poco Involucrado

Las ideas sobre madres demasiado protectoras y padres indiferentes abundan en nuestra cultura. Como padres, estas ideas nos limitan y nos frustran.

Una profesora de una guardería infantil una vez describió el caso de una pequeña niña cuya madre la traía todas las mañana a la escuela y luego, durante la primera hora, se paraba en el prado fuera de la ventana de la sala de clase de modo que su hija, que era tímida y que le tenía miedo a la escuela, pudiera ver que su madre no la había dejado. Esto duró por casi dos meses. ¿Demasiado involucrada? ¿Demasiado protectora? ¿O, estaba esta madre solo preocupada de que su hija no se sintiera abandonada y simplemente hizo una elección que le pareció extraña a otros?

La natural y saludable necesidad de un niño de conectarse y nutrirse de su madre está solo ahora siendo reconocida una vez más. Las madres necesitan reconocer esto y saber que el instinto de proteger y sustentar a su niño no solamente es natural sino que también es correcto y bueno.

Así como las como las madres han sentido tanta angustia al ser estereotipadas como "demasiado involucradas", los padres también han sido inundados de culpabilidad y angustia al ser representados como padres fríos, superficiales, y poco involucrados. Demasiados "expertos" falsos y mal informados han ignorado y denigrado el papel del padre. Se presumía que los hombres tenían poco deseo o capacidad para cuidar, sustentar o estar con sus niños. El lugar de un hombre era proveer de apoyo financiero, jugar "al pillarse" con su hijo una vez al mes, y asistir al recital de baile de su hija cada primavera. De hecho, esto simplemente no es así. Los hombres pueden proveer experiencias positivas, tiernas y sustentadoras a sus niños y a sí mismos.

Jeff era un estudiante de post-grado mientras su esposa estaba encinta y trabajaba. Era financieramente necesario

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pareció satisfactoria. Entonces Jeff decidió que él cambiaría su programa de estudios. Él cuidaría de su hija durante el día y asistiría a la escuela en la noche. Por tres años así fue como funcionó y todo marchó bien. Jeff "se enamoró" de su niño y de sí mismo como "padre". Su esposa se sintió libre de culpabilidad volviendo a trabajar tan pronto. Aunque Jeff tuvo que pasar un año extra en la universidad para acomodarse al programa de clases nocturnas, los beneficios de este arreglo fueron asombrosos, haciendo que esta familia fuera capaz de comunicarse a un nivel muy profundo y personal. Su hija, sintiéndose segura con la conexión que tenía con ambos padres, ha florecido.

Los padres de hoy necesitan saber que ellos, y sus niños, pueden ganar de padres que confían de sus propios sentimientos. Un padre que genuinamente comunica su amor y afecto a sus niños, una madre que honestamente se permite sí misma ser "mamá", beneficiará a sus niños de maneras que no pueden ni imaginar, pero eso será evidente con cada nuevo desafío que su niño maneje exitosamente. La necesidad de una conexión sincera y clara entre el padre y el niño comienza al nacer y no parece terminar nunca. La necesidad incumplida de estas conexiones dejan a nuestro niño con lo que el doctor Geneen Roth llama un "corazón hambriento". Si no mantenemos a nuestros niños cerca de nosotros, nunca podremos ayudarlos a irse y ellos nunca podrán realmente crecer.

El Mito de "Entre Usted y Su Niño"

Uno de los mitos más famosos y palpables sobre la crianza de niños es que lo que usted – y solo usted – hace con su niño es lo único que importa. Si no hubiera otros miembros de la familia o historias familiares, quizás esto sería valedero. Sin embargo, las familias son sistemas sociales interconectados muy complejos. Lo que usted dice y hace con su niño (los dos solos) está coloreado por el sistema familiar en el que usted vive.

Nadie en un sistema familiar está totalmente aparte o solo. Nada realmente separa a los miembros de una familia. Una familia es como un sistema ambiental en el que, cuando falta o cambia un elemento, la totalidad es cambiada para siempre.

Mel y su hijo, Charlie, estaban frecuentemente en contra el uno al otro. Sus temperamentos no podían ser más diferentes. Mientras Mel es relajado, abierto a situaciones espontáneas, y muy modesto; su hijo, Charlie, de seis años, tiene una necesidad muy evidente de ser organizado, fuerte, y estar en control. Debido a que son tan diferentes tenían dificultades relacionándose entre sí de maneras positivas. La hija de Mel, Miranda, encuentra la franqueza y espontaneidad de su padre maravillosa y pasa mucho tiempo con él. Susana, la esposa y madre, es bonachona y también le gustan las cosas "suaves".

Un día, la escuela de Charlie tuvo un día de "padres e hijos" y Charlie descubrió cosas nuevas sobre su padre que no había sospechado; la calidez de su padre, su buen humor, y su naturaleza amante de la diversión lo hizo popular con todos los amigos de Charlie. Charlie impresionó a su padre con sus cualidades de líder y sus capacidades organizativas, emergiendo con donaire, a lo largo del día, como el líder natural de cada grupo del que fue parte. Ese día creó una apertura para la comunicación entre el padre y el hijo en base a las calidades positivas que mutuamente descubrieron, lo que continúa en la actualidad. Este fue un desarrollo maravilloso y positivo y sin embargo cambió fundamentalmente el funcionamiento de esta familia. Miranda ya no tuvo más la atención irrestricta de su padre y más de una vez lo resintió. Aunque había sucedido algo positivo, la familia necesitó ayudar a Miranda a aceptar la nueva cercanía entre su hermano y su padre. Cualquier cosa que sucede en una familia, le sucede a todos en esa familia.

El Mito De Ser Padre Sin Fe

Estas es una de las ideas más importantes que encararemos como padres y cabezas de familia. Los niños necesitan tener alguna estructura de moralidad y valores dentro de la cual vivir sus vidas. Los padres que tienen fe y un sistema de creencias como parte de sus vidas son más aptos de criar niños que serán capaces de sobrevivir las duras cosas que a veces la vida tiene que ofrecer. Los padres, cuando ellos mismos viven dentro de una estructura de fe, le pueden hablar a sus niños sobre moralidad de una manera fácil. Ellos se sienten cómodos pidiéndoles a los niños que hagan sacrificios cuando se necesitan estos sacrificios y son capaces de explorar y contestar las difíciles preguntas que los niños a veces hacen.

Los rituales, una parte intrínseca de la textura y la tela de la vida familiar, son una de las maneras más importantes en que los padres pueden ayudar a los niños a sentirse seguros y bien con respecto a sí mismos.

Además de las tradiciones y ricos rituales religiosos que puede haber en una familia, hay rituales especiales y únicos que creamos con nuestra familia. Algo tan simple como un viernes por la noche en familia regularmente y en piyamas, piza, y una película alquilada o panqueques todos los domingos por la mañana, pueden hacer una gran diferencia en la manera en que una familia se relaciona entre sí y con el mundo en general.

Enseñar a los niños que la caridad y ayudar a otros está muy a su alcance es otra manera en que los padres pueden ayudar a sus niños a sentirse facultados y bien consigo mismos.

Ginger era una Exploradora Brownie de cinco año que ayudaba a su tropa a recolectar alimentos para los sin casa para el Día de Acción de Gracias. Su familia misma estaba muy cerca de estar casi desvalida, sin embargo, Ginger trabajó más duro que todos durante la recolección de alimentos. Cuando le preguntaron por qué había trabajado tan duro ella contestó, "bueno, mi mamá y mi papá dicen que es importante ayudar a la gente que no tiene tanto como nosotros". Esta familia tan pobre y esforzada, mediante su fe y su dignidad, había hecho que su niña se sintiera "rica" y contenta con su vida.

Los padres que tienen creencias fuertes proveen a sus niños con el mejor de todos los "espacios seguros" posibles. Estos padres contribuyen con un lugar cálido y seguro para que crezcan sus niños - un espacio lleno de dulces rituales que proveen conexiones y memorias; actos y pensamientos caritativos que le permiten a los niños comprender que el mundo entero está conectado y que frecuentemente ayudando a otros también nos ayudamos a nosotros mismos; un comportamiento ético que significa que cosas como el dinero y la posición deberían ser obtenidos solo sin dañar a otros; y finalmente, que en este mundo hay posibilidad para el amor y la bondad más allá de lo que podríamos imaginar.

Los padres necesitan recordar que aunque a veces pueden ser distraídos por la tensión u otras dificultades, sus instintos son buenos; que ellos deberían escuchar lo que la gente dice solo cuando se siente correcto; que deberían escuchar a su propia voz interior y saber que muy frecuentemente están en lo correcto. Y esas veces cuando simplemente no tenemos una respuesta, ir a lugares o personas en las que se confía a encontrar la respuesta. Converse con consejeros, miembros del clero, profesores, amigos cercanos, familia, pero, más importante que todo, escuche a su propio corazón.

Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour es una escritora independiente y parte del equipo de "Parent and preschooler Newsletter". Este artículo es una adaptación de "Parenting by Heart " por el doctor Ron Taffel con Melinda Blau; publicado por Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, (Paperback) 1993.

Translated By:
Tikal Translations
212-569-6475

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 12, Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* July - 1997

LETTING GO WITH LOVE

Growing At Ease With Your Child's Growing Independence

A mother who is dressed for her day at work holds her seven month old baby as she opens the door to greet the sitter. Suddenly the baby, who has been fussing, breaks into smiles and reaches for his familiar care-taker. "See you later, sweetpea," says the mother, but the baby doesn't stop squeezing the sitter's face. "Mommy always comes back," she tries again, but the baby is being carried off to the kitchen and is happily reaching for the sitter's glasses.

Parents are often ambivalent about their child's growing independence. Of course parents feel good knowing their baby has extended trust to someone else who will take good care of her during the work day, but it hurts a little too. What if someone else gets called "mama", or "dada", or sees the belly-wiggling baby suddenly discover how to lurch on all fours and start crawling?

Mothers who stay home with their children can also find themselves pleased with a child's growing ability to be independent, yet sad at the loss of being the child's sole comforter, as during those early years of life. It's hard when a child says, "I want to go to grandpa's house," or when she would rather watch television than greet a father who has just come home from work. However, there is no greater reflection of our success as parents than the growing independence of our children. The supportive relationship and secure base we create enables our children to move forward towards independence. They trust us and can now trust themselves and the world.

• Steps towards independence

It's natural for children to become more and more autonomous. At every age and stage children are changing, and becoming more independent and competent individuals.

Although it can be hard for us to watch our gentle but continuous displacement as the center of the universe, it is also hard for children to keep growing more independent. Children seem to take one step back for each two steps forward. They need the comfort of being able to go back to an earlier stage, particularly if stressful events have occurred. We need to remember that children still need unconditional love, rather than love earned by meeting standards family and school have set for them; and they also need our support to help them keep meeting and coping with the joys and challenges of growing independence.

• Infants

A new infant learns to tolerate the sounds, bright lights and textures around him and cries less and less. The baby finds a thumb or is quieted with a pacifier. Taking substitute objects for comfort besides a parent is a baby step of self help. Even babies who turn their heads after a long encounter with an admiring person are using a behavior of competence. "That's enough," signals the baby, in lieu of fussing.

Soon the little ones toddle away to reach all the interesting places they have only been able to look at, as they crawled with heads lifted. The 14-month-old who masters his body enough to walk upright alarms his parents who see him toddling off into dangerous situations, innocently walking towards the fire burning in the fireplace or heading towards the stairs. This is a parent's first opportunity to create a safety net, and yet allow a child to move towards mastery and independence.

As baby's world expands to include other adults, she develops bonds and relationships which extend outside the family. Parents may sometimes feel uncomfortable when babies love their nanny, family home day care provider, or child care center teacher, but when babies become attached to more than one person their sense of security can be enhanced. Parents need to remember that a baby bonds most strongly with her parents. Other relationships never replace the ties between parent and child.

Although the ability to spend time with an adult other than a parent is a milestone, these separations can strain both parent and child. Re-knit the raveled threads by finding the time to enjoy cuddling, singing, rocking and playing with baby. Both baby and parent need that.

- **Two-Year-Olds**

Children will be either demanding independence or complaining about not getting enough, all their growing years. A parent's dilemma between helping when needed and coaching for self help gets intense with the two-year-old. Their battle cry is "I do myself", even when they can't. Two-year-olds don't know they can't climb a fence by themselves, or start their favorite computer game, but they want the freedom to try. Here again, parents can provide the protection to allow a child "safe" independence and mastery.

As young children leave home for more and more experiences, transition times can be hard. Going from home to grandma's or from a friend's house to their own home often comes with angry body language. The words to tell us how they feel aren't there. When children shift gears parents need to be patient. Adults would do well to establish a routine for separations and have easy to understand explanations ready.

Narrating what is happening is always helpful. "You don't want to go to nursery school?", or "Does it make you upset that mommy is going away?" saves a sobbing child from having to find the words. Be relaxed and make it a simple fact that children go to child care and mommies and daddies go to work. "It's okay to cry (or get mad), but remember mommy (or daddy) always comes back."

Develop a consistent and predictable routine - a final honk as dad drives out of the parking lot, a reassuring phrase as mom says goodbye. At a friend's house, a five-minute warning that it will soon be time to go helps smooth the transition between playing with friends and leaving.

For the child who is reluctant to try new experiences we need to find ways to encourage curiosity and courage. Hold your two-year-old while you feed the baby lamb, then gently encourage him to try.

- **Preschoolers**

Preschoolers start making friends, and parents begin to run a distant second. You may drop your child off at a playmate's house only to have her vehemently resist coming home again. It's easy to feel your child would gladly be taken in by another family for just two more hours of doll play.

Preschoolers often don't want to go home from preschool at pick up time. The space station they have built with their friends is more fun that playing with parents. A three-year-old may not want to play a board game with his mom anymore, he wants to play with the boy next door instead.

When a parent and preschooler have a fight, the parent may hear "You're not my friend anymore". He may even tell a mother she is not invited to the birthday party that she is planning. This is a four-year-old's way of using language instead of fighting. He's angry and doesn't yet know how to express it fully in words, but he's trying.

Even though parents hear hurtful things like "You're stupid" or "you're not my favorite deputy anymore", we have to remember we are still the most important people in our child's life.

As children gain confidence and move away from the family, a parent may wonder if values and attitudes of others are taking precedence over their own. While it is nice to be able to leave our children in the care of others, no parent wants this freedom at the cost of losing the opportunity to teach family values. Parents and children need to establish a special time together where toys are enjoyed on the floor, games are played on the table and parent-child attachment is clearly one of caring. Focused quality time reminds children how much we value them and how much we have to offer them. We give them the freedom and independence they want and need, yet remind them of our presence and love.

- **Kindergartners**

Five-year-olds can yell and argue or walk away from disagreeable situations more than they could as preschoolers. They can find their own shoes and jackets and try buttons and laces, asking for help less often. They come to breakfast self-dressed, with toothpaste smears on their faces. And even their bedtime routine may reflect their growing self confidence and independence. They may not want anyone to sing "Hush Little Baby" anymore, it's "baby stuff".

Five-year-olds also face the milestone of starting kindergarten. At first, children may be reluctant and unsure; they now face being the youngest in a larger setting, with higher expectations. Although they may be thrilled with the scribbles that have finally turned into words, they may still be ambivalent about where their steps away from home bring them. "He won't be my friend anymore", "the teacher made me do it" or "it wasn't my fault" may be a plea for intervention, but it can also be sounding off to someone who will take the time to listen.

- **Letting go with love**

Children are always going to be ambivalent about moving ahead. We need to accept that, and give them the space to hesitate. In that space they will find the strength to move forward once again with confidence. It's a good exchange - competence for dependency. The growing independence of a child that begins with baby accepting someone else's care continues as children head away from our arms and homes, returning for support, but growing up. It leaves us richer to let go with love.

Bette Simons, MS is the Director of First Step Nursery School and Child Development Center, Inc. and author of *Winning at Child Caring: Easier ways with young children in child care centers, homes and malls* *(Creative Book Co., Panorama City, Ca.)*

Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

The summer sun is hot, hot, hot
I'm going to find a shady spot, spot, spot
To lick my fruit-filled frozen treat
To cool me in the summer heat!

In the summer, when the temperature begins to soar, devote some time to just cooling off. One way is by serving frozen snacks. While ice cream and other purchased freezer items might taste good, they are often high in fat and sugar. Manufacturers do produce some products that are healthier but you have to check the label to determine the amount of fat and sugar per serving. For example, sherbet, ice milk and frozen yogurt have 2-3 grams of fat per 1/2 cup serving while chocolate ice cream can range from 8 to 18 grams of fat per 1/2 cup serving, depending on the brand. And popsicles have 0 grams of fat per serving.

While ice cream is high in fat, it is delicious, and certainly a treat you can serve, limiting the amount and frequency. Make it more nutritious by:

✓ adding fresh fruit into or on top of the ice cream
✓ serving it on graham crackers or whole grain cookies or crackers
✓ topping with whole grain breakfast cereal

You can also make your own freezer treats. Unlike purchased items, you know exactly what you are feeding your preschooler when you make your own treats. The recipe for Fruit 'n Juice Pops blends 1/2 the fruit and leaves 1/2 in chunks for an interesting texture. And what a great way to serve 100% fruit with no sugar added!!

Fruit 'n Juice Pops

2 cans fruit cocktail *packed in natural juices*
8 popsicle molds or 8 3-oz. paper cups and popsicle sticks or spoons

Pour one can of fruit with juice into a blender or food processor. Drain a second can of fruit but add its juice to the fruit in the blender. Blend until smooth. Help your preschooler spoon the unblended fruit evenly into molds or cups and then pour the blended fruit and juice over the fruit chunks. Cover with tops of mold, or insert popsicle sticks or spoons. Freeze overnight. Unmold to serve. You might need to tear the paper cups to remove the popsicle. Note: if you are using sticks, watch young preschoolers to prevent choking.

You can use store-bought sherbet to make an easy, colorful Rainbow Pie with three layers of flavors.

Rainbow Pie

1 cup each lime, orange and raspberry sherbet (or your family's favorite flavors)
1 graham cracker crust

Slightly soften the sherbet so it is easier to scoop. Let your preschooler spoon the layers of sherbet into pie crust so that each piece of pie will have each of the flavors. Freeze several hours or overnight. Serves 6-8.

○ **Try these recipes with your preschooler and find a cool or shady spot to eat!**

ATTACHMENT

What do infants and young children need to enable them to feel confident, explore the world around them, grow towards independence and mastery, develop friendships and face adversity? One answer is a loving, supporting parent.

Babies become "attached" to parents (and other adults) who understand and meet their needs, demonstrating that the world is a caring place. They feed baby when he is hungry, soothe baby when he is upset, and play with baby when he is ready to be social. They provide a sense of security which enables baby to begin to explore the world around him.

As baby grows and continues to receive dependable and supportive care, she continues to flourish. She learns self-control and can wait her turn at snack time. She can persist in trying to fit blocks together to build a tower, and she delights in her accomplishment. She works more cooperatively with others. She does these things because she sees the world around her as a good place with loving, dependable people.

Sometimes however, the care baby receives is far less than ideal. If a parent frequently rejects or ridicules a child's bids for comfort in stressful situations, the child may come to develop a model of the parent as rejecting, but also of himself as not worthy of help and comfort.

Not merely speculation, research has revealed that responding to an infant's signals during feeding, play, and distress resulted in differences in behavior later on. With these experiences, toddlers more confidently attempted to solve easy problems and when challenged with more difficult situations, enlisted their parents' support in order to achieve a solution. These "secure" children also functioned better in the preschool both with the teacher and their peers. Children without these experiences became frustrated and negative.

Of course, as in any relationship, some children are easier to parent than others. Parents do have to work extra hard at staying calm and sensitively meeting the needs of irritable babies and children with a more difficult temperament. A lack of support and high levels of stress can also make it difficult for parents to focus on the needs of their children. But even when parent-baby relationships have a bit of a rocky start, children can still benefit from parents who become more aware of and able to meet their child's needs. When we become more aware and effective parents, our children always benefit.

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Library Resources

SUMMER READING FOR KIDS

📖 ***Janet's Thingamajigs*** by Beverly Cleary; illustrated by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan; A Mulberry Paperback Book; New York; 1997. This is a charming story about children's little treasures and their need for privacy. It is an exploration of how children find their place in the grown-up world.

📖 ***Little Baby Books*** by Helen Oxenbury; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1985. This is a collection of four tiny, board books for the very young child. They are wonderful for little hands.

📖 ***Chubbo's Pool*** by Betsy Lewin; Clarion Books; New York; 1996. Betsy Lewin creates a wonderful story based on her travels in Botswana. It is a nice illustration of the concept of sharing; illustrated with vivid watercolor drawings.

📖 ***Engelbert Joins the Circus*** by Tom Paxton; illustrated by Roberta Wilson; Morrow Junior Books; New York; 1997. Through humorous illustrations this book is a springboard for discussion about it being possible to be comfortable and to have friends in more than one environment.

📖 ***Is It Larger? Is It Smaller?*** by Tana Hoban; A Mulberry Paperback Book; New York; 1985. This is a picture book which can be used to help children find words to describe their world; it also teaches concepts such as large and small.

📖 ***From Head to Toe*** by Eric Carle; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1997. "From Head to Toe" is a good book for very young children teaching basic body parts and simple body movement.

📖 ***Katy Cat and Beaky Boo*** by Lucy Cousins; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1996. *Katy Cat and Beaky Boo* is another in a wonderful series of-lift-the-tab books. Lots of fun for very young children.

📖 ***Ella and the Naughty Lion*** by Anne Cottringer; pictures by Russell Ayto; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, Mass.; 1996. When Ella's mother brings home a new baby, Ella needs to learn how to be a big sister. The book cleverly uses the Lion to illustrate Ella's jealous feelings.

📖 ***Rush Hour*** by Christine Loomis; Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass. Written in verse, *Rush Hour* is a colorful account of the life of the city. For the city-dwelling child there will be recognition and for the country dweller there will be the wonder of an almost "foreign" place. And it says that no matter where you live, families are still families and that is what counts.

📖 ***Fireman Small*** by Wong Herbert Yee; Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass. This is the story of a wonderful man and the many remarkable and heroic things he does throughout the course of one day. While good work and good deeds are often unacknowledged, that is not the case here. His friends and neighbors thank him for his kindness.

📖 ***Every Buddy Counts*** by Stuart J. Murphy; illustrated by Fiona Dunbar; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, N.Y.; 1997. Part of the MathStart series, this Level 1 book introduces the concept of counting from one to ten as a little girl counts her "buddies" and realizes how lucky she is to have friends. Suggestions for other math activities are also included.

Dear Reader

Watching my son grow ever more confident and capable has been the greatest joy of my life. However, it's the story of roots and wings. We give our children the warm, sensitive care which creates strong roots and then we watch our wonderful, resourceful children take wing and fly. But these roots also mean that they will return to us. We are their unseen security blanket, providing support and love, and their tireless cheering squad. So, this month Bette Simons explains how kids struggle with the issue of independence and how we can help them. The box on attachment provides a glimpse into some of the research which underlies independence and "roots and wings".

And don't forget to try Amy Houts' recipes. It may be blistering hot but with these treats the weather forecast is for cool and delicious.

Have a safe and happy July 4th!

Neala Schwartzberg

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Your concerns are our concerns. We would love to hear your comments, suggestions, and questions.

Watch for our reader survey coming soon. Please take a few minutes to respond to this survey and let us know what issues are important to you!

Let's Talk!

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

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The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER
NEWSLETTER
Pp Parent and preschooler
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute
En Español
Volume 12, Number 7 An International Resource for Professionals and Parents July - 1997

DEJANDO IR, CON AMOR

Con La Creciente Ind Sintiéndose Cómoda Ependencia De Su Niño o Niña

Una madre, vestida ya para su día de trabajo, sostiene en sus brazos a su bebé de siete meses mientras abre la puerta para recibir a la niñera. Repentinamente el bebé, que ha estado inquieto, se vuelve puras sonrisas y le extiende sus brazos a su cuidadora habitual. "Hasta más tarde, bombón," dice la madre, pero el bebé no para de pellizcarle la cara a la niñera. "Mami siempre vuelve," intenta nuevamente la madre, pero el bebé está siendo llevado a la cocina y con gran alegría le trata de asir los anteojos a la niñera. Los padres frecuentemente se sienten ambivalentes con respecto a la creciente independencia de sus niños. Por supuesto que los padres se sienten bien de saber que su bebé le ha dado su confianza a alguien que lo cuidará bien durante el día, pero también esto hiere un poco. ¿Qué pasa si otra persona es llamada "mami", o "papi", o repentinamente ven a su tesoro de bebé descubrir como partir en cuatro patas y comenzar a gatear?

Las madres que se quedan en el hogar con sus niños también pueden sentirse felices con la creciente capacidad de su niño de ser independiente, y al mismo tiempo, sentirse tristes por la pérdida que significa ser la única sustentadora del niño, como en los primeros años de vida. Es duro cuando un niño dice, "Quiero ir a la casa del abuelo", o cuando prefiere seguir viendo la televisión que saludar al padre que acaba de regresar a casa del trabajo. Sin embargo, no hay mayor reflejo de nuestro éxito como padres que la creciente independencia de nuestros niños. La relación sustentadora y la base segura que creamos le permite a nuestros niños avanzar hacia su independencia. Ellos confían en nosotros y ahora pueden confiar en sí mismos y en el mundo.

Pasos hacia la independencia

Es natural que los niños se pongan cada vez más y más autónomos. En cada etapa y edad los niños cambian, y se transforman en individuos más independientes y competentes.

Aunque puede ser duro para nosotros observar nuestro gentil pero continuo desalojamiento como centro del universo, también es duro para los niños hacerse más independientes. Los niños parecen dar un paso para atrás por cada dos pasos hacia adelante que dan. Ellos necesitan la tranquilidad de poder volver a una etapa anterior, particularmente si han ocurrido acontecimientos estresantes. Necesitamos recordar que los niños todavía necesitan amor incondicional, más bien que el amor ganado por cumplir con normas establecidas por la escuela y la familia; y también necesitan nuestro apoyo para ayudarlos a amoldarse y lidiar con las alegrías y desafíos de una creciente independencia.

Los Infantes

Un nuevo bebé aprende a tolerar los sonidos, texturas y luces brillantes de su alrededor y llora cada vez menos. El bebé encuentra uno de sus pulgares o se aquieta con un chupón. Usar objetos como sustitutos para tranquilizarse en vez de uno de los padres, es un paso adelante en el proceso del bebé de ayudarse a sí mismo. Incluso los bebés que dan vuelta la cabeza después de estar un momento con un admirador o admiradora, están demostrando un comportamiento competente. "Ya es suficiente", señala el bebé, en lugar de inquietarse.

En breve los pequeños se alejan tambaleando tratando de alcanzar todos los lugares interesantes que, mientras gateaban con la cabeza levantada, solo habían podido mirar. El niño de 14 meses que domina suficientemente su cuerpo como para caminar alarma a sus padres que lo ven tambalear hacia situaciones peligrosas, caminando inocentemente hacia la chimenea encendida o hacia las escaleras. Esta es una de las primeras oportunidades para un padre de crear una red de seguridad, y al mismo tiempo permitirle al niño adquirir destreza e independencia.

A medida que el mundo del bebé se expande para incluir a otros adultos, él o ella desarrollarán vínculos y relaciones que se extienden fuera de la familia. Los padres pueden sentirse a veces incómodos cuando sus bebés demuestran amor por su niñera, la proveedora del cuidado doméstico, o la profesora del centro parvulario, pero cuando los bebés llegan a encariñarse con más de una persona su sentido de seguridad puede mejorar. Los padres necesitan recordar que un bebé se vincula más fuertemente con sus padres. Las otras relaciones nunca reemplazan los vínculos entre un niño y sus padres.

Aunque la habilidad de pasar tiempo con un adulto que no es ninguno de los padres es un hito del desarrollo, estas separaciones pueden poner tensos tanto a los padres como al niño. Teja de nuevo los hilos deshilvanados encontrando el tiempo para disfrutar abrazándose, cantando, hamacando y jugando con su bebé. Tanto los padres como el bebé lo necesitan.

Niños de Dos Años

Los niños estarán o "coqueteando" con la independencia o quejándose de que no reciben suficiente ayuda durante todos los años de crecimiento. El dilema de un padre entre ayudar cuando se necesita y entrenar para la auto-suficiencia llega a ser intensa con los niños de dos años. Su grito de batalla es "Yo hago solo", aun cuando no pueden. Los niños de dos años no saben que ellos no pueden subir un cerco por sí mismos, o empezar su juego favorito en la computadora, pero ellos quieren la libertad de poder tratar. Nuevamente aquí, los padres pueden proveer protección para permitirle al niño independencia y destreza con "seguridad".

A medida que los niños jóvenes salen del hogar para tener

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más y más experiencias, las etapas de transición pueden ser duras. Ir de su casa a la de la abuela, o de la casa de un amigo a su propio hogar, frecuentemente se manifiesta con un lenguaje corporal que indica enojo. Las palabras que necesitan para decirnos como se sienten no están ahí. Cuando los niños cambian de marcha los padres necesitan ser pacientes. Los adultos harían bien en establecer una rutina para las separaciones y tener explicaciones fáciles de comprender ya preparadas.

Narrar lo que está ocurriendo es siempre útil. "¿No quieres ir a la escuela parvularia? ", o "¿No te gusta que mami tenga que ir lejos?" le evita a un niño que llora tener que encontrar las palabras adecuadas. Muéstrese relajado y dé como un simple hecho el que los niños van a la escuela parvularia y las mamis y papis van a trabajar. "Está bien llorar (o enojarse), pero recuerda que mami (o papi) siempre vuelven"

Desarrolle una rutina predecible y consistente - un bocinazo final mientras papi sale del parque de estacionamiento, una frase tranquilizadora mientras mami dice adiós. En casa de amigos, una advertencia de cinco minutos para avisar que pronto será tiempo de irse, ayuda a suavizar la transición entre jugar con sus amigos e irse a casa.

Para el niño que es reacio a intentar experiencias nuevas, necesitamos encontrar maneras de fomentar su curiosidad y su audacia. Sostenga a su niño de dos años mientras Ud. alimenta a la ovejita, y luego, suavemente estimule a que él o ella traten por si mismos.

Los Pre-escolares

Los pre-escolares comienzan a hacer amigos, y los padres comienzan a quedar en un distante segundo plano. Puede dejar a su niño en la casa de un amigo o amiga y luego encontrarse con una vehemente resistencia a regresar a casa nuevamente. Es fácil sentir que su niña se quedaría feliz con otra familia por un par de horas más para jugar a las muñecas.

Los pre-escolares frecuentemente no quieren irse a casa a la hora de recogida de la pre-escuela. La estación espacial que han construido con sus amigos es más divertida que jugar con sus padres. Un niño de tres años puede no querer seguir jugando un juego con su mami, en cambio puede querer jugar con el niño vecino.

Cuando un padre y un pre-escolar tienen una pelea, el padre puede oír algo así como "Ya no eres mi amigo". Hasta le puede decir a su madre que ella no está invitada a la fiesta de cumpleaños que ella misma está organizando. Esta es la manera de un niño de cuatro años de usar lenguaje en vez de pelear. El está enojado y aún no sabe como expresarlo totalmente en palabras, pero aun tratan.

Aunque los padres oyen cosas hirientes como "Eres un estúpido" o "Ya no eres más mi agente secreto favorito", tenemos que recordar que todavía somos las personas más importantes en la vida de nuestros niños.

A medida que los niños ganan confianza y se alejan de la familia, un padre puede preguntarse si los valores y las actitudes de otros toman precedencia sobre la propia familia. Aunque es bello poder dejar a nuestros niños bajo el cuidado de otros, ningún padre quiere esta libertad a costa de perder la oportunidad de enseñar los valores familiares. Los padres y los niños necesitan establecer un tiempo especial donde disfruten juntos con los juguetes en el piso, o jugando juegos sobre la mesa, y la relación de padre a niño sea claramente una de cariño. El tiempo de buena calidad, enfocado en una actividad, recuerda a los niños cuánto los valoramos y cuánto tenemos que ofrecerles. Nosotros les damos la libertad e independencia que quieren y necesitan, pero les recordamos nuestra presencia y amor.

Niños de kindergarten

Los niños de cinco años pueden gritar en discusiones o marcharse de situaciones desagradables más que cuando eran pre-escolares. Pueden encontrar sus propias chaquetas y zapatos y amarrarse cordones o cintas y abrocharse botones, pidiendo ayuda menos frecuentemente. Vienen a desayunar después de vestirse solos con manchas de dentífrico en la cara. Y hasta su rutina para irse a la cama refleja su creciente independencia y confianza en si mismos. Pueden no querer que nadie les cante más, "Duérmete mi niño", porque es una canción para "bebés".

Los niños de cinco años también enfrentan el hito de comenzar el kindergarten. Al comienzo, los niños pueden sentirse reacios e inseguros; ahora tienen que enfrentarse con ser los más jóvenes en una situación más amplia, con expectativas más altas. Aunque pueden emocionarse con los borrones que finalmente se han transformado en palabras, todavía pueden sentirse ambivalentes con respecto a donde los llevan sus pasos, lejos del hogar. "Ya no eres más mi amigo", "El profesor me hizo hacerlo" o "No fue mi culpa" pueden ser un pedido de intervención, pero también puede ser una prueba para ver si alguien se dará el trabajo de escuchar. Ser independiente puede dar miedo.

Dejar ir, con amor

Los niños siempre van a sentirse ambivalentes con respecto a progresar. Nosotros necesitamos aceptar eso, y darles espacio para titubear. En ese espacio ellos encontrarán la fortaleza para avanzar una vez más con confianza. Es un buen intercambio - competencia por dependencia. La creciente independencia de un niño que comienza con el bebé que acepta los cuidados de otros, continúa a medida que los niños se alejan de nuestros brazos y hogares, volviendo para recibir ayuda, pero siempre creciendo. Nos deja más ricos dejarlos ir con amor.

Bette Simons, MS, es Directora del "First Step Nursery School and Child Development Center, Inc." (El primer paso, escuela y centro de desarrollo y cuidado de niños, Inc.). Es autora de "Winning at Child Caring: Easier Ways With Young Children In Child Care Centers, Homes And Malls" (Ganando en el cuidado de niños: maneras más fáciles con niños pequeños en guarderías infantiles, hogares y centros comerciales) - Creative Book Co., Panorama City, Ca.

Translated By:
Tikal Translations
212-569-6475

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 12, Number 8 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* August - 1997

MAKING THE ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY

Take Time to Help Your Child Explore the World

Adam is a wiry four-year-old, a study in perpetual motion. His brown hair is usually tousled, his shirt tails are often out, and he talks as fast as a rushing stream. Adam has a busy life, filled with activity and stimulation. He is learning new strokes at swimming, new moves at judo, new rolls at gymnastics and all about a variety of new media through which to express himself in art class.

Adam's parents are busy people too, working full time to maintain their home and family life, while always wanting to provide "the very best" for their child. Working out the logistics for getting Adam from nursery school to all of his lessons and activities has not been easy, but it has a high priority with both of his parents. Weekends seem crowded too, but in a different way. There are trips to the hardware store and to the pharmacy, followed by a trip to rent the latest children's video. "Just taking care of what needs to be done," the parents say to one another. It seems like Adam and his family are always in the car and on the move.

☼ Taking a New Perspective

For parents of young children it is important to step back from the action and take a long deep look at what is happening with their child and within their own lives. Of course it can be to Adam's advantage to be exposed, in time, to a rich variety of experiences in order for him to discover what he truly loves to do. Of course it can be to Adam's advantage to build upon his skills, to feel personal success to enhance his self-esteem. All of this is a matter of both timing and degree. Is Adam receiving too much too soon? Are Adam's parents feeling that every minute of their waking hours must be accounted for in terms of productivity and a sense of purpose in their quest for "the good life"?

☼ Give Young Children Ample Time

Young children need time just to process the art of living. They need time to think about what has gone before and what is going on right now. They need unhurried time to formulate their questions and receive answers to those questions. When Felicia is walking in the park with her father or mother, she may wonder why the leaves of her favorite climbing tree are turning red and yellow or why she only sometimes sees her shadow. If young children feel rushed, they miss the chance of developing their own powers of observation. But, if they are given ample time, they will feel free to ponder the wonders of nature and the world around them, and then to ask their many questions.

Youngsters are not programmed or inwardly pressured to always be on time. They are more focused on the here and now. When rushed, they become flustered and forget the things they need to do. They forget to take their favorite purple mittens to daycare, or leave the library book on the kitchen table, even though they promised to return it on Wednesday. In turn we become upset, think that they are so forgetful, when in truth we have not given them enough time to think through everything and remember what they had planned to do.

Youngsters need time to daydream too, quiet times when nothing is planned and expectations are not lingering in the doorway. They need time to play with thoughts and ideas, time to make up stories filled with fantasy; time to tell us those stories as they get into pajamas getting ready for bed. These stories herald the beginnings of both logic and creativity, of putting ideas into sequential order and giving free reign to the imagination.

Children need time to get to know themselves; to listen, ever so intently, to their own soft inner voices. They need time to think about their lives, about what has gone on in daycare today, how people get their feelings hurt, why things don't always work out well. Young children need time to reflect upon why a friend took their toy without even asking. Children need time to look, see and feel who they really are, as well as to try and understand why other people act the way they do.

Children need very basic experiences upon which to build their lives.

○ The Parents Role

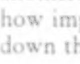
For the most part it is the parents who design and set the stage for what goes on in a young child's life. We direct the action. We choose the books to sit upon their shelf. We purchase the music and the videos they listen to and watch over again. We also guide the pace at which play takes place, deciding if there is time to bake cookies before dinner, or how long their bath should take.

Young children can be encouraged to have time to themselves, just like Dad or Mom. It encourages personal decision-making and promotes self-reliance -- both needed skills for living. For Adam it could be time to check and play with each of his "cat's eye" marbles, or for Felicia to decide whether it is time to change the water in her parakeet Chirpy's cage.

Young children need very basic experiences upon which to build their lives. A toddler learns about the properties of snow by feeling the coldness of the snowflakes falling on his upturned face, a three- or four-year-old comes to understand the power of the wind by watching the branches of a birch tree dance in a blustery storm. By nature young children are eager to drink in new sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. Just imagine putting on your yellow raincoat and hat and your cousin's outgrown old red boots and stomping in every puddle in front of the place where you live. Just imagine going out into a darkened night, holding extra tight to a parent's hand, and looking up at a star-studded sky; taking the time to discover together where the Milky Way stretches across the summer sky. It creates a special time for parents and children to share with one another. It reminds parents how important it is to slow down the pace of their lives.

○ Activities for the Family

There are a wealth of simple and satisfying activities that parents and young children can share. Eating together is part of the core of family life. It is nourishment that extends far beyond what is set upon the table. It is sitting down together to talk about what has gone on that day, and listening to what each person has to say. It is also a time when young children experiment with new tastes and textures to extend their culinary horizons.



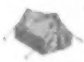
Cooking, Mixing, and Measuring

When time allows, let your child work along with you, making hamburger pizza for Saturday's lunch, or blueberry muffins for Sunday's breakfast. Let them put on a dishtowel apron and a chef's hat made from a white paper bag, to help him play the role. Start a cookbook of recipes that were family hits and perhaps even illustrate each page with magic markers.

Young children love to measure and mix, to work hard at learning how to crack an egg. They feel empowered when asked to slice the cheese with a plastic knife, to do the things that grownups do. Thinking in terms of measuring ingredients is an engaging way of bringing numbers and mathematics into young children's lives. Watching the changes that occur when the cheese on the pizza melts or blueberry muffins bake is science seen in action. Having time to create, observe and talk about these things together sets a foundation and a way of learning for now and for the future.

Nooks and Crannies

Young children like to tuck themselves off and away in hidden corners, creating private places and sometimes secret spaces, that they can share with you or call their own. There are times when together you can make a hideaway with cushions from the couch or several easy chairs; or drape a cotton sheet across a table top. There are also times in young children's lives when they feel the need to retreat from the daily hustle and bustle of their world and be alone to have some solitary thinking time.



The Great Outdoors

A picnic on the rooftop of your apartment building, in your own backyard or in a nearby park can be a family adventure. Part of the delight is in the planning. Where shall we go? What will we take with us? What can we prepare for our marvelous meal? Going on a picnic can, at times, offer the opportunity for a child to help build a fire, first gathering dry twigs and leaves and then constructing a "log cabin" of larger branches. Here in the outdoors Adam can learn about safety rules, about what is and what is not permissible where fires are concerned. By knowing he must put out the fire completely and put each and every stone of his circular fireplace back where he found them, he is learning to respect and care for our environment.

Children need time just to process the art of living.

You can also turn that picnic into a camping trip, or just a long evening out of doors. Drink in the night air and the night sounds. Drink in the moon and the shooting stars. Listen for the haunting hoot of the Barred Owl, which before you may have only read about in books. Drink in the sunrise and the Red-winged Blackbird's wake up call. Carry the memories of those moments with you. Let them be a sweet reminder of the peaceful qualities that our world can offer, when we give ourselves permission to slow our pace.

Carol B. Hillman, M.S.Ed., M.Ed., is an adjunct Professor at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, NY. She is the author of *Before the School Bell Rings* and *Teaching Four-Year-Olds: A Personal Journey*. She is a contributing author to *The Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Helping Young Children Learn*, published by Preschool Publications.

Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

Lunch Box Treats

The lunch box can be a source of comfort for young children as they head off to school. It's like sending a little bit of home right along with them. My daughter's favorite lunch to bring to school is cheese and mustard. Occasionally, she'll bring cheese and turkey or peanut butter and jelly, affectionately titled PB&J.

Some children find it comforting and reassuring to bring the same lunch to school, while others get bored having the "same old thing" every day. They enjoy a change in their luncheon repertoire. They might even appreciate the spicy taste of picante sauce on their lips and tongue just as much as any adult.

Your preschool or child care center may have the option for children to bring lunch or snacks from home. Or they may have strict rules about what children can bring. The preschool where I taught provided meals and there was no option to bring lunch.

If you can send lunch or snacks this gives you a chance to provide your preschooler with an old favorite, or a new treat. If your child isn't away for lunch, take time for a fall picnic. On a crisp sunny day, pack a lunch, go to the park and notice the signs of autumn.

When planning and preparing lunch, work as a team with your preschooler. It's nice to remember that aside from special edible treats, sending a funny picture, a "found" item such as a pretty shell or small pine cone, or a loving note from mom and dad are also sweet surprises that can go into any lunch box.

Depending on your child's likes and dislikes, be creative. Use a bagel, pumpernickel or pita bread. Use a variety of cheeses; American, Swiss, or Cheddar. Add lettuce, bean sprouts, or watercress. Think past the traditional sandwich and serve pasta salad, fruit and cheese, or veggie sticks and peanut butter.

➢ **Pack several little things**: a half sandwich rather than an overwhelming whole one, a few apple slices (dipped quickly in lemon juice so they don't turn brown) instead of a whole apple. To a preschooler, small servings of several items are better.

➢ **Include a variety** of foods from the food pyramid; breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, meats, and milk.

➢ **Extend the nutritional value** of the meal. If your child likes yogurt, add fruit to the yogurt, or pack granola to mix in.

➢ **Include an ice pack** if a food needs to be refrigerated or kept chilled.

Pasta Salad With Variations

8-oz package curly noodles, cooked and drained
1/2 cup Italian (oil and vinegar) dressing OR mayonnaise
2 tablespoons parmesan cheese
1 cup diced celery
1/2 green pepper, diced

Let your preschooler help mix all the ingredients together. Spoon into a small container with a lid (such as a margarine tub). Be sure to include a fork.

● Variations:
- add a can of tuna for a main dish salad
- add 2 tablespoons chopped pimento for color
- add 1 sliced, steamed zucchini, 1/4 cup sliced black olives and cubes of mozzarella cheese.

Chewy Oatmeal Bars

1/3 cup margarine, melted
1 cup brown sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
3/4 cup all purpose flour
3/4 cup quick 1-minute oats
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Your preschooler can grease a 9 x 9 inch square pan. Help her mix the melted margarine, brown sugar, egg and vanilla. Then add the rest of the ingredients, stirring just until mixed. Dough will be thick. Pour into the pan, spreading to corners. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Cool, cut into 20 squares.

● Variations:
- sprinkle 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips on top of dough before baking.
- sprinkle 1/2 cup raisins and chopped walnuts on top of dough before baking.

Dear Reader

How can we be in August already? Didn't school just end? Didn't the summer just begin? Sometimes we are so busy rushing around, the days just seem to disappear. We need to remember to enjoy the warmth, sun, and slower pace which summer brings. It's all too easy to get caught up in running here, doing that, going there. So, I'm delighted to be able to share Carol Hillman's message to take the time to relish life and extend that gift of time to our children. We've also included some tips for parents on helping children get ready for school. The lazy days of August are a great time for long talks. Amy Houts has given us some great ideas for children's lunch boxes, too.

So let's put up our feet, grab a cold drink and savor the rest of the summer!

Neala Schwartzberg

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of *North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center*
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043

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Printed in the U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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Ready, Set, School

When the calendar changes from August to September thoughts often turn from the beaches and woods to the nursery school and kindergarten. For many children this will be the first time they are in a "real" classroom, or in a new environment. Even youngsters who have longed for this day may be a little nervous. What if the teacher doesn't like me? What if I have to go to the bathroom? Will I like the other kids? What if I'm frightened? These jitters are normal, but need to be taken seriously. Our children are going out on their own, even if we are standing behind them to form a safety net. Children, like adults, generally feel reassured when they know what is going to happen and what is expected of them. So as August drifts into September parents can begin to prepare their children for school.

- Visit the library and take out books about children's experiences at school.

- If your child knows someone who has gone to that school, arrange for them to meet and talk about it. If your child will have friends starting at the same time, try to arrange for them to visit the school together.

- Introduce your child to the teacher(s) and the classroom before school begins. Almost every school has a formal program to ease the transition, but if your child's school doesn't, call up and arrange for you and your child to visit before classes start.

  Discuss your child's typical day. Let her explore the classroom. Ask where the bathrooms are and how that's handled.

- Visit the playground and walk around the grounds of the school.

- Be available the first day of school if at all possible.

- Discuss the clothes your child will wear, what he can take with him. Tell him what will happen in the morning. Make the night before a relaxing evening and try to make sure your youngster gets enough sleep.

- Have a family celebration at the end of that first day with your child's favorite foods. Encourage her to tell you about her experiences and her feelings. If she has had any problems, work with her to solve them.

- If your child has a medical condition make sure the school and the teacher know about it and how to deal with it.

- If your child is particularly fearful about school, alert the teacher and discuss how you can work together to help your child.

Library Resources

Summer Reading For Kids

Who is Ben? by Charlotte Zolotow; pictures by Kathryn Jacobi; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1997. "Who is Ben" is a special treasure about a little boy who discovers his place in the world. It is a lovely and sensitive book that parents can use as a springboard for discussion.

Sun Song by Jean Marzollo; illustrated by Laura Regan; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1995. Through rich verse and marvelous illustrations "Sun Song" is a story of the sun's passage through an entire day from dawn until dusk. This book is a jewel.

Higgle Wiggle Happy Rhymes by Eve Merriam; pictures by Hans Wilhelm; A Mulberry Paperback Book; New York; 1994. "Higgle Wiggle" is a collection of short, cheerful poems that will be fun to read with children.

What Do You Hear When Cows Sing? And Other Silly Riddles by Marco and Giulio Maestro; pictures by Giulio Maestro; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1996. This is a book of wacky word play and funny riddles for kids. It is a nice way to begin to learn to use language creatively.

Where is My Baby? by Harriet Ziefert and Simms Taback; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1996. A charming lift-the-tab book depicting adult and baby animals. The illustrations are funny and engaging.

Raven and River by Nancy White Carlstrom; illustrated by Jon Van Zyle; Little, Brown, and co., Boston, 1997. "Raven knowing swoops out of winter into spring, circling, circling. He gurgles and burbles like a river flowing." So begins this story of spring coming to the arctic and waking the river and the animals who live along its banks. A poetic read-aloud book with lyrical paintings as illustrations.

Five Little Monkeys With Nothing To Do by Eileen Christelow; Clarion Books, New York, 1997. The five little monkeys help their mother clean house and pick berries in preparation for a visit from their grandmother. In the midst of all of this work they make as much a mess as they clean up. The book is an affectionate rendering of loving sibling interaction. It is a sweet book, full of rich and humorous illustrations depicting their grandmother's visit as a special and positive event.

Bugs Paper Chains by Stewart and Sally Walton; Tupelo Books, of William, Morrow & Co.; New York; 1997. If your child likes poking around in the dirt to uncover bugs, or watching insects fly, they will love *Bugs Paper Chains*. Here they'll learn to make chains of bees, crickets, ladybugs, and more. Using the heavy paper templates which come in the book, they can trace bug shapes on the patterned paper. The book also includes directions to make special bug projects like placemats, mobiles, and their own paper bug variations.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

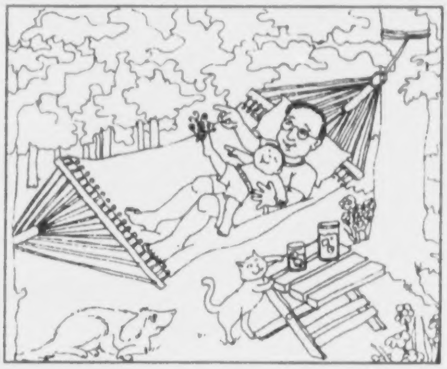
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 12, Number 8 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — August - 1997

HACIENDO LO ORDINARIO EXTRAORDINARIO

Dése tiempo para ayudar a su niño a explorar el mundo



Adam es un delgado niño de cuatro años, un estudio de movimiento perpetuo. Su pelo marrón está comúnmente revuelto, su camisa frecuentemente fuera del pantalón, y habla tan rápido, como un arroyo correntoso. Adam tiene una vida ocupada llena de actividades y estimulación. Está aprendiendo nuevas maneras de nadar, nuevos movimientos de judo, nuevas pruebas de gimnasia y todo sobre una variedad de nuevos medios de comunicación con los que podrá expresarse s sí mismo en la clase de arte. Los padres de Adam son gente ocupada también; trabajando tiempo completo para mantener su estilo de vida y su hogar, siempre queriendo "lo mejor" para su niño. Lograr la logística para llevar a Adam desde la pre-escuela a todas sus lecciones y actividades no ha sido fácil, pero es una alta prioridad para ambos padres. Los fines de semana también son abarrotados de actividad, pero de una manera diferente. Hay viajes a la ferretería y a la farmacia, seguidos de viajes para alquilar el "último" video para niños. "Solo estamos haciendo lo que es necesario hacer", se dicen los padres mutuamente. Parece como que Adam y su familia están siempre en el automóvil y en movimiento.

Tomando Una Nueva Perspectiva.

Para los padres de niños pequeños es importante echar un paso atrás y dar una mirada larga y profunda a lo que sucede con su niño y dentro de sus propias vidas. Por supuesto que puede ser una ventaja para Adam el ser expuesto, cuando llegue el momento, a una variedad de ricas experiencias para que él descubra lo que verdaderamente le gusta hacer. Por supuesto que puede ser una ventaja para Adam aumentar sus habilidades, sentir éxito personal y mejorar su auto-estima. Todo esto es materia tanto de oportunidad como de grado. ¿Está Adam recibiendo demasiado, demasiado pronto? ¿Están los padres de Adam sintiendo que cada minuto de las horas en que están despiertos, deben estar justificadas desde el punto de vista de la productividad y un sentido de propósito en su búsqueda de "la buena vida"?

Dele A Los Niños Pequeños Suficiente Tiempo.

Los niños pequeños necesitan tiempo simplemente para procesar el arte de vivir. Necesitan tiempo para pensar sobre lo que ha pasado antes y lo que está pasando ahora mismo. Ellos necesitan de tiempo reposado para formular sus preguntas y recibir respuestas a esas preguntas. Cuando Felicia camina por el parque con su padre o su madre, ella puede preguntar por qué las hojas de su árbol favorito, al que le gusta subirse, se vuelven rojas y amarillas, o por qué ella ve su sombra solo a veces. Si los niños pequeños se sienten presionados, pierden la oportunidad de desarrollar sus propias facultades de observación. Pero si se les da suficiente tiempo, se sentirán libres para pensar sobre las maravillas de la naturaleza y sobre el mundo alrededor de ellos, y luego hacer las muchas preguntas que tienen. Los niños pequeños no están programados o presionados internamente para estar siempre a tiempo. Ellos se enfocan más en el aquí y el ahora. Cuando se ven presionados se ofuscan y olvidan las cosas que necesitan hacer. Olvidan llevar sus mitones favoritos al parvulario, o dejan el libro de la biblioteca sobre la mesa de la cocina, a pesar de que prometieron devolverlo el miércoles. Por nuestra parte, nosotros nos molestamos, pensamos que ellos son tan olvidadizos, cuando en verdad no les hemos dado suficiente tiempo para pensar todo y recordar lo que habían planeado hacer. Los pequeños necesitan tiempo para fantasear, momentos de calma cuando no hay nada planificado y las expectativas no están esperando en la puerta. Ellos necesitan tiempo para jugar con pensamientos e ideas, tiempo para construir historias llenas de fantasía; tiempo para contarnos esas historias mientras se ponen el pijama y se alistan para irse a la cama. Estas historias anuncian el principio de la lógica y la creatividad, de poner ideas en orden secuencial y de darle rienda suelta a la imaginación. Los niños necesitan tiempo para llegar a conocerse a sí mismos; para escuchar, intensamente, a sus propias voces interiores. Ellos necesitan tiempo para pensar sobre sus vidas, sobre lo que ha pasado en el parvulario hoy, como se hieren los sentimientos de la gente, por qué las cosas no siempre resultan bien. Los niños pequeños necesitan tiempo para reflexionar sobre por qué un amigo les tomó su juguete sin pedírselo. Los niños necesitan tiempo para mirar, ver y sentir quienes son realmente, así como también para tratar de comprender por qué otra gente actúa de la manera que lo hace.

El Papel De Por Los Padres.

Por lo general son los padres los que diseñan y construyen el escenario en el que transcurre la vida de un niño pequeño. Nosotros dirigimos la acción. Nosotros escogemos los libros que van en su estante.

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Nosotros compramos la música y los videos que ellos escuchan y ven de nuevo. Nosotros controlamos también el ritmo al que se juega, decidiendo si hay tiempo para hornear bizcochos antes de la cena, o cuánto tiempo debería tomar su baño. Los niños pequeños pueden ser fomentados a tener tiempo para sí mismos, igual que papá o mamá. Esto fomenta la toma de decisiones personales y promociona la confianza en si mismos -- habilidades que son necesarias para la vida. Para Adam podría ser tiempo para sacar y jugar con su bolitas "ojo de gato", o para Felicia, decidir si es tiempo de cambiarle el agua de la jaula de su perico Pepe. Los niños pequeños necesitan experiencias muy básicas sobre las cuales construir sus vidas. Un niño aprende sobre las propiedades de la nieve sintiendo la frialdad de los copos que caen sobre su cara dada vuelta hacia arriba. Un niño de tres o cuatro años llega a comprender el poder del viento viendo las ramas de un abedul bailando en una recia tormenta. Por naturaleza los niños pequeños están ávidos de beber nuevas vistas, sonidos, olores, gustos y sensaciones táctiles. Simplemente imagínese ponerse su sombrero e impermeable amarillo y las viejas botas rojas que a su primo le quedaron chicas, y pisar los charcos de agua frente al lugar donde vive. Imagínese simplemente saliendo en una noche oscura, sosteniendo más fuerte que lo usual la mano de uno de sus padres, y mirar al cielo tachonado de estrellas; dándose tiempo para descubrir juntos hasta donde se extiende la Vía Láctea a través del cielo estival. Compartir cosas como estas con un niño crea un tiempo especial tanto para los padres como para los niños. Le recuerda a los padres cuan importante es frenar la marcha de sus vidas.

Actividades Para La Familia.

Hay un tesoro de actividades simples y satisfactorias que padres y niños pequeños pueden compartir. Comer juntos es parte del núcleo de la vida de familia. Es nutrición que se extiende mucho más allá de lo que está puesto sobre la mesa. Es sentarse juntos para hablar sobre lo que ha pasado ese día, y escuchar lo que cada persona tiene que decir. Es también un momento cuando los niños pequeños experimentan con texturas y gustos nuevos para expandir sus horizontes culinarios.

Cocinar, Mezclar y Medir.

Cuando el tiempo lo permite, deje que su niño trabaje junto con usted, haciendo piza de hamburguesa para el almuerzo del sábado, o panecillos de arándano para el desayuno del domingo. Déjelo ponerse un delantal y sombrero de cocinero hecho de una bolsa de papel blanco, para ayudarlo a jugar el rol. Comience un libro de recetas que fueron un éxito de familia y quizás hasta ilustren cada página con lápices de color.

A los niños pequeños les encanta medir y mezclar, y se esfuerzan para aprender a romper un huevo. Ellos se sienten facultados cuando se les pide que corten el queso con un cuchillo plástico, haciendo las cosas que hacen los mayores. Pensar desde el punto de vista de medir ingredientes es una manera de traer los números y las matemáticas a las vidas de los niños pequeños. Observar los cambios que ocurren cuando se derrite el queso sobre la piza o cuando los panecillos de arándano se cuecen es ver la ciencia en acción. Tener el tiempo para crear, observar y hablar sobre estas cosas juntos crea una fundación y una manera de aprender para ahora y para el futuro.

Escondrijos y Hendiduras.

A los niños pequeños les gusta meterse en rincones ocultos, creando lugares privados y espacios a veces ocultos, que ellos pueden compartir con usted o considerarlos como propios. Hay veces cuando pueden hacer juntos un escondite con cojines del sofá o varias sillas; o poner una sábana de algodón por encima de una mesa. Hay también veces en la vida de un niño pequeño cuando ella siente la necesidad de apartarse del bullicio diario de su mundo y quiere estar solo para simplemente pensar solitariamente.

El Gran Mundo Exterior.

Un picnic sobre el techo de su edificio de apartamentos, en su propio patio trasero o en un parque cercano puede ser una aventura familiar. Parte del goce está en la planificación. ¿Dónde vamos? ¿Qué llevamos con nosotros? ¿Qué podemos preparar para nuestra maravillosa comida? Ir de picnic puede, a veces, darle la oportunidad a un niño de ayudar a construir una fogata, recopilando primero ramitas secas y luego construir una "cabaña de troncos" de ramas más grandes. Aquí en el exterior Adam puede aprender reglas de seguridad, qué es y qué no es permitido en lo que se refiere a fogatas. Al aprender que debe apagar el fuego completamente y poner todas y cada una de las piedras de la fogata circular de vuelta donde las encontró, aprende a respetar y cuidar nuestro medio ambiente. Usted también puede transformar ese picnic en un viaje para acampar, o simplemente una larga tarde afuera. Beba el aire y los sonidos de la noche. Beba la luna y las estrellas fugaces. Escuche el frecuente ulular de las lechuzas, que antes puede haber visto solo en libros. Beba del alba y de las llamadas a despertarse de los mirlos de alas rojas. Llévese consigo las memorias de esos momentos. Deje que sean un dulce recuerdo de la paz y tranquilidad que nuestro mundo puede ofrecer, cuando nos permitimos frenar nuestro ritmo.

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Translated By:
Tikal Translations
212-569-6475

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 12, Number 9 ★ *Special Six-Page Edition* ★ September - 1997

RED-FLAG BEHAVIORS: *Developmental Milestones and Concerns*

Katy's parents are worried. Their daughter's preschool teacher repeatedly phones home to report that Katy hits and scratches the other children in her class. She has stuck out her tongue and even hit her teacher. She does not participate in group circle times and is unable to learn common songs and nursery rhymes. Her classmates do not seek her out as a playmate, but provoke skirmishes with her. Her parents' discipline has been to no avail, and Katy continues her unacceptable behavior.

Jonathan, a bright and articulate four-year-old, seems to be running on high all the time. Even before birth he moved about continually. Now, he is one of the most agile and active on the playground. "He is 'big' about everything," says his mother, "eats like a horse, sleeps like a log." At times, it seems as if he monopolizes the entire household. Jonathan's parents, a soft-spoken and gentle couple, have difficulty keeping up with his pace.

As Katy's and Jonathan's parents are finding out, raising a child is a joyful experience, but it is also filled with many challenges. Parents watch their child's development and monitor their child's behavior, measuring it against the yardstick of "normal". But what is normal? How does a parent know when development or behavior has gone awry?

Experts agree that there is a range of behavior and development which we label as "normal". Within that range, individual children develop at their own pace. Development which is outside of that range may be a "red flag", indicating the need for early intervention and support.

Speech and Language

A baby's language begins to develop immediately after birth. She will gurgle and coo, and turn towards familiar voices. By nine months to a year, baby will begin to imitate her parent's speech and these imitations grow into baby's first words. The babble "muh-muh" will evolve into "Mama".

Around one year of age, most children will begin to respond to simple questions or commands, clapping hands or waving "bye-bye". But baby's ability to understand what we say out paces her ability to verbally express herself. She can respond with excitement when you ask her if she wants juice, but she can't verbalize her request.

By age two, your toddler will have a small vocabulary of important nouns (e.g. mama, dada and cookie), verbs (e.g. go), and adjectives (e.g. hot) which she will use to form simple two-word sentences. Chrissie's mother often overhears her daughter practicing putting phrases together murmuring "daddy go", or "Cissy cookie".

Between two and four years of age there will be a veritable explosion in language. A three-year-old will ask questions like "Why does the car go?" or "What does a bird eat?" Although his articulation and pronunciation may be far from perfect, his syntax is maturing and he is more at ease using his new enlarged vocabulary to express his ideas. By four years of age children become even more sophisticated; recognizing rhyming words, homonyms such as "no" and "know", and even venturing a pun.

Youngsters still have limitations. They have difficulty using words to express their emotions or negotiate conflicts. Parents and teachers are needed to help children learn to use words to resolve disputes and convey their feelings.

Parents also need to be aware that speech and language development are dependent upon good hearing and constant exposure to language. Research confirms that children, from birth, are prepared to learn language. Parents are the teachers. As we feed, bathe, and change diapers, as we play with them, we are literally giving our children the sounds, concepts, and syntax of language.

Ear infections are common in early childhood but they can temporarily or permanently effect hearing. If you have any questions about your youngster's hearing, have it tested by a licensed audiologist.

Motor Skills Development

Parents are always comparing the age their baby turned over, crawled, and walked. As with other areas of development, "normal" covers a range of ages. A child can sit at five months, or at seven months, and still be developing appropriately.

In general, children can crawl by 9 months and walk by 14 months, but the age can vary considerably from child to child. The progression of motor development is more important than the age at which any particular milestone is achieved. Sean didn't crawl until he was 11 months old. His father was concerned and asked the pediatrician about possible developmental delays. The doctor noted that although Sean was achieving all of his motor milestones a bit late, he had been making steady progress and assured the anxious parent that this was normal. If you see a steady progression from one motor milestone to another, don't be too concerned if your child is about two or three months behind the "average" child in crawling, cruising and walking.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive ability is the ability to learn. A five month old child should consistently recognize familiar people and react with a facial expression, body movement, and/or vocalizations.

Following directions is a major cognitive achievement, but it is also the product of the complex interaction of language, memory and motor skill. Generally by you child's second birthday he'll be able to carry out short and simple directions. Your two-year-old should be able to understand and follow "Please bring me your jacket", if he wants to be cooperative. By three he will be able to remember more than one set of directions; retrieve his jacket and hat from his cubby and make an attempt to put them on. In fact, at this age your three-year-old can even decide if your request is realistic. If you ask your daughter to bring you the elephant from the backyard you are likely to get a laugh. She knows that's not possible and will giggle at the incongruity.

Between the ages of three and five your child will be able to tell you a story in a sequence, and make a plan of action to solve a simple problem. Take a peek at a four- or five-year-old using her computer. She will be able to follow the procedures necessary to open and use her favorite programs. At age five, your youngster will show impressive problem-solving abilities, as long as it is a concrete, "hands-on" problem. Interpersonal and abstract issues will defeat her. She will probably be about seven years old before she can think abstractly and be able to take another child's point-of-view.

Social and Emotional Development

Children develop their social and emotional skills within the context of their relationships with their family, caregivers, and friends. These relationships are the cornerstone of future emotional development.

Children often display a range of emotions which include both positive and negative feelings. They will show contentment and joy, but also displeasure, frustration, and even anger. However, children are more reactive than adults, moving more quickly from one extreme tc another.

Expression of these negative emotions is normal, as long as they are expressed at appropriate times and situations. Children who react inappropriately raise a red flag. If your child is constantly frustrated and angry, doesn't like any of the books you try to read, flings her toys around because you aren't playing with them "right", she may be having problems with emotional and social development, or be experiencing other problems which are being expressed in this area.

One exception seems to be the toddler tantrums known as the "terrible twos". These emotional meltdowns are the expressions of the child being flooded or overwhelmed by strong feelings but without the words to explain those feelings. Sometimes there is no awareness of why the tantrum is taking place and the adult must try to find the cause and the solution.

A child in the supermarket has a tantrum over a box of cookies, even though there is a package of these same cookies already in the cart. A youngster fights with his parents to try and climb playground bars which are too high and wide. These children have tantrums because they can't tell us they are hungry or tired or very frustrated. Their goals have exceeded their abilities and the result is a volcanic eruption.

As children mature, they will develop an increased tolerance for waiting their turn and waiting for what they want. The circumstances surrounding this delay will make a difference. A child who becomes angry because a playmate grabbed a toy will require some adult help to resolve the situation, but the same five-year-old will probably be able to wait until his sister arrives home in 1/2 hour so the family can have dinner together.

Another aspect of emotional and social development is the way your child plays with friends. Children's play with peers should progress from solitary play, to parallel play near a peer, to cooperative play. Evan, racing his car along the floor, is playing alone, even if he is sitting next to another child. Andrew is adept at enlisting a playmate to crash cars against the wall. Although the children crash cars together there is a little plot or interaction. They are playing next to each other. Deborah, organizing her friends to use puppets and put on a show, is playing cooperatively. Each child has a different role, and words and actions are used to negotiate taking turns and "who does what".

All children mix solitary, parallel and cooperative play until they are about five. After this age, children who persist in playing alone, or along side another child rather than interacting may be having difficulties in this area.

Jonathan and Katy: A follow-up

Jonathan's parents were concerned that their son was hyperactive, a condition they had read about in many magazines and newspapers. They decided to take Jonathan to be evaluated at a child guidance clinic. The results of the testing were very reassuring. Jonathan was indeed a very high energy and intense child, but his behavior and ability to concentrate were well within normal range for a child his age. Although very relieved, Jonathan's parents decided some supportive counseling would help them understand his needs and how to meet them, as well as help them adjust their own behavior and expectations. In addition, they found a friend of Jonathan's who was also an active child and enjoyed going with Jonathan to the playground. Together the two boys climbed and ran and jumped and played.

Katy's parents had a serious 'red flag'. Although initially reluctant to consider Katy's behavior as a problem, they did realize that Katy was only going to have greater difficulties later on and experience even more rejection from her peers. Looking back into Katy's development, her parents found some hints to understand her aggressive outbursts. They realized that Katy had recurrent ear infections and a constantly runny nose since she was a few months old, with repeated courses of antibiotics prescribed by the pediatrician. Her parents decided to consult with an ear, nose and throat specialist to have Katy's chronic ear infections and congestion thoroughly evaluated. They suspected that Katy's behavior was the result of a hearing, speech, or language problem. A four-year-old who isn't hearing well or using language comfortably may be sufficiently frustrated in a social situation to resort to aggressive outbursts. The specialist confirmed Katy's difficulties and worked with her family to develop a plan to address these problems.

Problem behaviors in children may appear for a variety of reasons. Aggressive behavior in one child may have a very different origin than in a second child. Parents, teachers, and physicians must be good observers and detectives to begin to determine when to worry and how to go about solving the problem. (See *Observing -- a major way of knowing your child*, November, 1996)

Parenting presents multiple challenges to nurturing the growth and development of children. Knowing when to pay closer attention to a developmental or behavioral concern is a skill that can be learned. Making a plan to get help when help is needed is a gift parents can offer to their children and themselves.

Ellen Ferber, MSW, Ed.M., is a lecturer and trainer in early childhood development. She is Staff Developer at the New York City Bank Street Affiliate Public School. Ms. Ferber is married and has a 7 year old daughter.

Family Village Web Site for Families With Special Needs

Parents with children who have special needs will want to visit Family Village (http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu). Hosted by the University of Wisconsin at Madison, it provides resources and communication opportunities for families and children with mental and physical disabilities.

Try the *library* for information on specific disabilities, including organizations to contact, e-mail lists, articles, and links to other sites. The *school* area contains links to governmental agencies, inclusive education resources, early intervention resources and more. Click on the icons for *post office* and *coffee shop* which offer opportunities for parents to reach out to others for information and support.

Red Flags In Development

☑ **Speech and Language**

Late or missed milestones, lack of speech or very little talking, repeated ear infections, hearing difficulties.

☑ **Motor Development**

Late or missed milestones, awkward gait, weakness in arms and legs (e.g. tiptoe walking), atypical movements (e.g. hand flapping) and avoidance of motor activities.

☑ **Cognitive Development**

Lack of interest and ability with games, toys and puzzles compared to age peers, poor attention span, difficulty following short, simple directions, and late or missed milestones.

☑ **Social and Emotional Development**

Lack of eye contact, difficulty relating to others, sharp and sudden mood swings, unusually poor tolerance for frustration, rigidity or lack of flexibility, and unusually high activity levels. Relationships with other children and adults may be distant and somewhat detached.

☑ **Behavior**

Dangerous or potentially self-injurious behavior is a red flag not to be ignored. The child who injures himself repeatedly, or who talks about wanting to hurt himself, needs attention. A child who is depressed may not appear sad or forlorn. He may be a child who looks very angry, overeats, jumps from atop a high wall, or disregards the normal cautions other children obey.

A parent who is concerned about his child's development in any of these areas should consult a mental health professional or early childhood specialist in a clinic or out-patient hospital setting where the child and family can be seen for a thorough evaluation.

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If You Are Concerned

If you are concerned about your child here are a few basic strategies which will be helpful. These include:

▪ **Keep a journal** for two weeks. Record all instances of your child's behavior which cause concern. Include a description of the behavior and the time, place, and circumstances when it occurs. After two weeks, look for patterns. Mollie's mother, concerned about her temper tantrums, recorded four temper tantrums in two weeks, all in the supermarket right before lunch time. She decided that perhaps early morning shopping would be easier on everyone.

▪ **Try to determine the time frame** of your concern. Did the problem begin recently? Several months ago? Several years ago? Have you always wondered whether this aspect of your child's development is typical?

Every time Annie, a bubbly three-year-old receives a birthday party invitation she throws a tantrum and refuses to go. Her parents are puzzled. Her behavior doesn't fit with the rest of her outgoing social personality. As they thought about it, they realized that it started when Annie was about 18 months old and "Barney" appeared at a party. The costumed figure terrified Annie and she collapsed in tears, shaking and clinging to her mother. Clearly Annie's current behavior is a result of her fear and her difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality. Her parents began to read about the way children think and understand the world at different ages and developed a plan to help Annie with her fears.

▪ **Record questions and feelings** about the concern. Does someone else in your family exhibit this behavior or developmental pattern? How are you feeling about this?

▪ **Make a plan**. This could include consulting a friend, relative or expert. You may decide to track the behavior for two more weeks. Do some research on child development by reading books and magazine articles to help you understand what behaviors are considered common and normal for children.

Nathan's grandmother became concerned when she was visiting from out of town. Her 10-month-old grandson had just begun to crawl, but it was a crab-like skitter. He moved by scooting on his bottom, dragging one leg behind. His parents had noticed it, but kept thinking "he'd outgrow it". After discussing it, the family decided to look for other indications of movement-coordination problems and discuss it with the pediatrician. She observed him crawling and suggested that a physical therapist should be consulted to correct Nathan's muscle coordination and strengthen his muscle control.

Often parents have a strong wish to consider difficult behavior as a "passing phase". It is too stressful and upsetting to think a child may have a problem. Sometimes pediatricians miss a warning signal or "red flag" because the office visit is brief, or limited to the presenting complaint. But a red flag behavior will persist over time, presenting itself over and again for consideration by parents, family and teachers who see the child on a regular basis.

☎

Local Resources In Your Community

If you suspect that your child has a developmental delay, there are numerous resources in your own community where you can find help. These will include:

☎ Your Pediatrician

☎ Early Childhood Programs such as Head Start and Daycare Centers

☎ Public Schools

☎ Mental Health and Child Guidance Centers

☎ Early Intervention Centers

We Want To Hear From You

Every month we've been sending out the Newsletter and trusting that you find it helpful, interesting, and even fun. But we really don't know how you feel about it. This month, we've decided to ask. What do you think of the Newsletter? What do you like about it? What would you like to see included? So please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey. Thank you!

Library Resources

🕮 READING FOR KIDS

The Chocolate-Covered-Cookie Tantrum; by Deborah Blumenthal; illustrated by Harvey Stevenson; Clarion books; New York, NY; 1997. Sophie is a little girl who wanted a cookie but it was too close to suppertime and her mother said "no". Sophie had a tantrum and the book shows how her mother helped Sophie get over her bad feelings.

Shelley, The Hyperactive Turtle; by Deborah M. Moss; illustrated by Carol Schwartz; Woodbine House; Rockville, Md.; 1989. In a world in which turtles are supposed to move slowly, Shelley was a turtle who moved fast. This book, about loving and understanding, will help families deal with children's special needs.

🕮 FOR PARENTS

Your Growing Child; by Penelope Leach, Ph.D.; Borzoi Books/Alfred A.Knopf; NY; 1996. Penelope Leach has come into many homes through her TV shows but her book is exactly what it is meant to be - an encyclopedia covering everything. Feel free to look for a second opinion.

Child Behavior Francis L. Ilg, MD, Louise Bates Ames, Ph.D., Sidney M. Baker, MD, Gesell Institute of Human Development; Harper Collins, 1992. These books are a steady, reliable guide to child development with detailed descriptions and lots of examples. The series is very popular; the question and answer format and the broad scope make it a reassuring bedside tool for parents.

The Kindergarten Survival Handbook, The Before School Checklist and A Guide For Parents; by Allana Elovson, Ph.D.; illustrated by Andrea Elovson; Parent Educator Resources; Santa Monica, Ca.; 1993. This book provides concrete guidelines and examples of how to prepare children for school and provide a positive start in the learning experience.

The Doctor's Corner

Active? Hyperactive? ADHD?

Mrs. C. brought Johnnie into my office late one afternoon. She had asked for an appointment several days before and, according to my secretary, appeared very agitated. She said that it wasn't exactly an emergency, but that it was urgent that she see me soon.

Naturally I was intrigued and curious as to the nature of this visit. She walked in with Johnnie, a four-year-old who was jumping around and running in circles delightedly, and greeting everyone in my office cheerfully. He certainly did not appear sick. My nurse ushered Johnnie and Mrs. C. into an examining room to wait for me. During this rather short period, I could hear Johnnie running around, banging some toys together and laughing. When I entered the room, however, Mrs. C. was not laughing. She was very anxious and seemed on the verge of tears. I asked her what the problem was and she looked at me and started to cry. "I don't know what to do with Johnnie!" she exclaimed. "He can't sit still and he is always moving around in his nursery school class. He has the nicest teacher, a very quiet sweet young woman, who says that he is hyperactive and drives her crazy. She told me he wanders around the classroom and is very disruptive. She said that he might need medication for hyperactivity. That's why I came today. I'm very upset!

I asked Mrs. C. if Johnnie had difficulty paying attention in class, or if she noted difficulty at home paying attention. She said that the teacher told her that he did his work and, indeed, did well. It was the incessant activity that troubled her. After a thorough evaluation, it was clear that Johnnie was a victim of overdiagnosis. He had no disorder. He was suffering from other people's prejudice against his high activity level.

"Hyperactivity" has taken a beating in recent years. Most of us think of it as a disability associated with problems in learning. Almost everyone nowadays thinks they know what ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is, and even if they don't know what it is, they think it's bad, and needs medication to treat it. Now, medication is very often necessary for ADHD, but where does hyperactivity fit into this picture? Is hyperactivity itself really bad? Does it often require treatment with medication such as Ritalin? What relationship does it have to learning or paying attention? The truth is that "hyperactivity" is poorly understood by most people, including those in the medical and educational professions.

To really understand hyperactivity, one must first understand what a normal activity level is in the general population. In the simplest terms, activity level has to do with movement. This varies greatly in people; from those very placid, calm people who barely seem to move a muscle even while walking to those who seem to move every muscle in their body even while sitting. Even when these people seem calm, something is moving. It may be a knee, or a hip, or just a toe. Sitting still for them may be downright painful. These are the children who drive their teachers "crazy". In spite of this effect, however, these very active children are normal and they grow up to be very active normal adults. In many instances, these are people who have a high energy level and the capacity to produce a lot in a short period of time.

It is important to realize that activity is an inherited trait. "Hyperactive" parents tend to have "hyperactive" children. However, since we inherit characteristics from both parents, we're all mixtures of both. Sometimes, it's quite easy to see how a person resembles one or both parents. We can see the same eye color, shape of the nose, hair color, weight, or height. Other times the trait is behavioral such as shyness, and very definitely, activity level.

How do we know when hyperactivity is in the upper range of normal and when it is abnormal? It is not always easy to sort out. If a child can learn well and can interact with children satisfactorily, excessive activity is not abnormal. However, when hyperactivity is associated with difficulties with attention, learning, impulse control, oppositional defiant behavior, or any mixture of these, it becomes a problem. Depending upon the severity of the problem, the child may require educational remediation, and/or medication.

Our job as parents, health care professionals, and educators is to discover whether the "hyperactive" child has problems requiring intervention before labeling him (or her) as having ADHD. He may be exhibiting behavior, which may not be average, but is still normal.

Harold L. Levine, M.D. is a pediatrician in private practice in Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York. He is a clinical assistant professor at Cornell Medical School and an attending pediatrician at two major hospitals on Long Island. Dr. Levine is also a consulting pediatrician for Variety Preschoolers Workshop.

Dear Reader

"Don't worry mom," my son always says to me, "I'm fine."

"You don't understand," I always reply, "It's my job to worry."

Worrying is a parent's job (and one I do particularly well). We are supposed to look at our kids and make sure they eat enough, and eat enough of the right foods. We are supposed to fuss over them when they are sick, and take them to the doctor if that cold lingers. It's our job to make sure they have safe toys and safe places to play.

It is also part of our job to worry about their development. Are they walking and talking when and in the ways they should? Are they reacting appropriately to situations and people? When we think, perhaps, that they aren't, it is part of our job to do something about it; to take them to the people who can tell us if things are fine, or can use some fine-tuning.

Ellen Ferber, a mother and social worker, tells us what we should look out for and what to do about it. Also look at our special section on car safety. Making sure our kids are safe in cars is also part of our responsibility.

No one ever said parenting is an easy job, but the rewards are certainly worth the effort.

Neala Schwartzberg

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SAFE RIDING

Are the cars we drive today different from the ones we rode around in with our parents 25 years ago? Yes, they certainly are. Today's cars go faster, and stop faster. They are also more comfortable, definitely safer, and more reliable.

But what about the people behind the wheel? How reliable, safe, and responsible are we? Got to get the kids to school! Have to prepare for an appointment at the office! Make plans for a party on the weekend! Who has time to think about driving? Do all of us always buckle up every time we hop into the car to go to school, house of worship, play ground or wherever? Even the shortest trip to the corner store?

What about the kids, our most precious cargo? Are they always in the back seat where they are safest -- buckled up, or in a child safety seat that has been properly installed?

Today there are still some things we have to think about before taking off -- things that will help us benefit from the safety engineering features in today's car -- and help assure that if anything does happen, a sudden bump on the road doesn't have to lead to a big bump on the head.

Here are some answers to common safety questions to help you arrive safely, wherever your destination.

Q. Why do I have to bother with a seat belt?
A. The most effective lifesaving device in the history of the automobile is the three-point self-adjusting seat belt. This is the primary occupant restraint system in all modern passenger cars and should be used by every adult and those children who have outgrown their child safety device. Seat belts are effective in the widest range of accidents; front, side, rear, and rollover.

Q. My child wants to sit in the front seat with me. What's really so bad about that?
A. Many in the transportation industry believe that no child should sit in the passenger side front seat of any car equipped with air bags. The distance between the dashboard and the occupant is so large that the passenger-side air bag must be larger and more powerful than the driver's side air bag. The back seat is the safest place for all children, especially in cars equipped with a passenger-side air bag.

Q. I have air bags. Why do I need to use my seat belt?
A. The air bag is a supplement to the three-point lap/shoulder seat belt. It is designed to help protect the head and the chest in certain frontal collisions, but the 3-point lap/shoulder seat belt restrains both the upper and lower portions of your body in **all** accidental situations. The air bag system alone is simply not a satisfactory all-around restraint system.

Q. Do I really need a special child car seat? Why can't my child use a regular seat belt?
A. While the seat belts in your car will properly fit adults of a wide variety of sizes, children require supplemental seating devices appropriate for their size and weight. The regular seat belt won't be positioned properly for a child and won't be able to protect his or her chest in case of an accident. Without the shoulder strap in proper place, the lap strap will not offer sufficient protection. Also, care should be taken t to see that the device is both appropriate for the size of the child and installed in your car exactly as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Need a couple more reasons to make sure you and everyone in the car with you buckles up all the time?

- President Clinton, in a radio address in December, asked all adult Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against injuries and fatalities and to always keep children ages 12 and under buckled in the back seat where they are safest.

- "Every 14 seconds," according to Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, "someone in America is injured in an automobile accident. "Yet, all it takes," Secretary Slater said, "is about three seconds to buckle up."

- Wearing seat belts saved an estimated 9,797 lives in 1995, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). That's about 27 people a day who are being saved by the belt, on average, day in and day out, every day of the year.

- How many children under five are being saved by child safety seat use? About 300 in 1995 alone, and nearly 3,000 in the past 15 years, according to the NHTSA.

The information in this article has been provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Volvo Cars of North America, Inc. and other industry sources. We would like to thank Volvo Cars of North American for contributing this column.

WATCH FOR COMING MONTHS

The ***Parent & preschooler Newsletter*** will feature in upcoming Issues:

- ✦ Language Games
- ✦ Art and Your Child
- ✦ Taming Marital Conflict

Remember: The Newsletter is available in both English and English/Spanish Language Editions.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER
Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
*North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center*
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
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Layout and Design
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Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 12, Number 9 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* September - 1997

Edición Especial

COMPORTAMIENTOS "LUZ ROJA" : Hitos del desarrollo y temas de preocupación

Los padres de Catalina están preocupados. La profesora de su hija en la escuela pre-escolar repetidamente los llama por teléfono para informarles que Catalina golpea y rasguña a otros niños en su clase. Le ha sacado la lengua y hasta ha golpeado a su profesora. No participa en el grupo a la hora del círculo, y es incapaz de aprender rimas comunes y canciones infantiles. Sus compañeros no la buscan para jugar, sino que más bien provocan incidentes con ella. La disciplina de sus padres ha sido en vano, y Catalina continúa con su comportamiento inaceptable.

Jonathan, un brillante niño de cuatro años muy claro en sus ideas, parece estar todo el tiempo funcionando con gasolina de alto octanaje. Aún antes de su nacimiento se movia continuamente. Ahora, él es uno de los más ágiles y activos en los juegos del parque. "Es 'grande' con respecto a todo", dice su madre, "come como un caballo, duerme como un tronco". A veces parece monopolizar todo el hogar. Los padres de Jonathan, una pareja tranquila y gentil --de hablar pausado, tienen dificultades para mantener su propio ritmo.

Como están aprendiendo los padres de Catalina y Jonathan, criar un niño es una experiencia feliz, pero también está llena de muchos desafíos. Los padres observan el desarrollo de su niño y controlan su comportamiento, midiéndolo con la vara de lo "normal". Pero ¿qué es normal? ¿Cómo sabe un padre cuando el desarrollo o el comportamiento se ha torcido?

Los expertos concuerdan en que hay una gama de comportamiento y desarrollo que nosotros tildamos de "normal". Dentro de esa gama, los niños se desarrollan individualmente de acuerdo a su propio ritmo. El desarrollo que queda fuera de esa gama puede resultar ser una "Luz Roja", indicando la necesidad de intervención y apoyo a tiempo.

Locución e Idioma

El idioma de un bebé comienza a desarrollarse inmediatamente después del nacimiento. Gorjeará y arrullará, y se dará vuelta hacia las voces familiares. Para cuando tenga de nueve meses a un año, el bebé comenzará a imitar la conversación de sus padres y estas imitaciones crecerán hasta transformarse en las primeras palabras del bebé. El "muh-muh" se convertirá en "mamá".

Cuando tengan alrededor de un año de edad, la mayoría de los niños comenzarán a responder a órdenes o preguntas simples, palmoteando con las manos o haciendo "adiós" con la mano. Pero la capacidad del bebé de comprender lo que decimos es mayor que su capacidad de expresarse a sí mismo verbalmente. Puede responder con excitación cuando usted le pregunta si quiere jugo, pero no puede verbalizar su pedido.

Cuando tenga dos años de edad, su niño tendrá un pequeño vocabulario de sustantivos importantes (p.ej. mamá, papá y galletita), verbos (p.ej. ir), y adjetivos (p.ej. caliente) que usará para formar simples oraciones de dos palabras. La madre de Carlota frecuentemente escucha a su hija practicando a crear frases como "papá va", o "Cissy galleta"

Entre los dos y los cuatro años de edad habrá una verdadera explosión en la locución. Un niño de tres años hará preguntas como "¿Por qué anda el auto?" o "¿Qué come un pájaro?" Aunque su articulación y pronunciación pueden estar lejos de ser perfectas, su sintaxis está madurando y el niño se siente más cómodo usando su nuevo y ampliado vocabulario para expresar sus ideas. Cuando cumplen los cuatro años los niños son hasta más sofisticados; reconociendo palabras que riman, homónimos como "gata" (del automóvil) y "gata" (el animal), y hasta aventuran un juego de palabras.

Los niños todavía tienen limitaciones. Tienen dificultades para usar palabras para expresar sus emociones o manejar conflictos. Los padres y profesores necesitan ayudar a los niños a aprender a usar palabras para resolver disputas y transmitir sus sentimientos.

Los padres también deben estar conscientes de que el desarrollo de la locución y el idioma dependen de una buena audición y una constante exposición al idioma. Las investigaciones confirman que los niños están preparados para aprender a hablar desde el nacimiento. Los padres son los profesores. Al alimentarlos, bañarlos, y cambiarles los pañales, al jugar con ellos, literalmente le estamos dando a nuestros niños los sonidos, conceptos, y sintaxis del idioma.

Las infecciones a los oídos son comunes en la niñez pero pueden afectar al oído ya sea temporal o permanentemente. Si tiene cualquier pregunta sobre la audición de su niño, hágalo examinar por un audiólogo licenciado.

Desarrollo de Habilidades Motoras

Los padres están siempre comparando la edad de cuando su bebé se dio vuelta, cuando empezó a gatear, y cuando empezó a caminar. Como con otras áreas del desarrollo, lo "normal" cubre una gama de edades. Un niño puede sentarse a los cinco meses, o a los siete meses, y puede estar desarrollándose adecuadamente.

En general, los niños pueden gatear cuando han llegado a los 9 meses y caminar cuando han llegado a los 14 meses, pero la edad puede variar apreciablemente de un niño a otro. La progresión del desarrollo motor es más importante que la edad en que se logra cualquier hito específico. Sergio no gateó hasta los 11 meses. Su padre se preocupó y le preguntó al pediatra si habia una posible demora en el desarrollo. El doctor indicó que aunque Sergio logró todos sus hitos motores un poco tarde, había progresado constantemente, y le aseguró al ansioso padre que esto era normal. Si usted ve una progresión constante de un hito motor a otro, no se preocupe demasiado si su niño está alrededor de dos o tres meses más atrás del niño "promedio" en gatear o caminar.

Desarrollo Cognitivo

La capacidad cognitiva es la capacidad para aprender. Un niño de cinco meses debería reconocer consistentemente a las personas que ven habitualmente y reaccionar con una expresión facial, movimiento de cuerpo, y/o vocalizaciones.

Seguir direcciones es un logro cognitivo importante, pero es también el producto de la compleja interacción de la locución, la memoria y la habilidad motora. Generalmente cuando ha llegado a su segundo año el niño será capaz de llevar a cabo instrucciones simples y cortas. Su niño de dos años de edad debería ser capaz de comprender y seguir instrucciones como, "Por favor, tráeme tu chaqueta", si quiere ser cooperador. A los tres años será capaz de recordar más de un conjunto de instrucciones; tomar su chaqueta y su sombrero de su estante y hacer un intento de ponérselo. De hecho, a esta edad su niño de tres años hasta puede decidir si su pedido es realista. Si usted le pide a su hija que le traiga el elefante que está en el patio trasero es probable que reciba una risa de vuelta. Ella sabe que no es posible y se reirá de la incongruencia.

Entre las edades de tres y cinco años, su niño es capaz de contar una historia en secuencia, y formular un plan de acción para resolver un problema simple. Échele una mirada a un niño de cuatro o cinco años usando una computadora. Será capaz de seguir los procedimientos necesarios para abrir y usar sus programas favoritos. A la edad de cinco años, su niño mostrará una impresionante capacidad de resolver problemas, mientras sea un problema concreto, que pueda resolver "con las manos". Las cuestiones abstractas e interpersonales lo derrotarán. Probablemente tendrá que tener alrededor de siete año antes de que pueda pensar abstractamente y ser capaz de tomar el punto de vista de otro niño.

Desarrollo Social y Emocional

Los niños desarrollan sus habilidades emocionales y sociales dentro del contexto de sus relaciones con su familia, gente que los cuida, y amigos. Estas relaciones son la primera piedra del desarrollo emocional futuro. Los niños frecuentemente muestran una gama de emociones que incluye tanto sentimientos negativos como positivos. Mostrarán satisfacción y regocijo, pero también sinsabor, frustración, y hasta enfado. Sin embargo, los niños son más reactivos que los adultos, moviéndose más rápidamente de un extremo al otro.

La expresión de estas emociones negativas es normal, mientras se expresen en situaciones y ocasiones apropiadas. Los niños que reaccionan inapropiadamente encienden una "Luz Roja". Si su niño se frustra y se enoja constantemente, no le gustan ninguno de los libros que usted trata de leerle, lanza sus juguetes porque usted no juega con ellos "correctamente", él o ella pueden tener problemas de desarrollo social y emocional, o experimentar otros problemas que están siendo expresados en esta área.

Una excepción parecen ser los berrinches de niño conocidos como los "los terribles dos años". Estos estallidos emocionales son expresiones del niño indicando que se siente inundado o abrumado por fuertes sentimientos, pero sin las palabras para explicar esos sentimientos.
A veces no hay una concepción de por qué la pataleta se da lugar y el adulto debe tratar de encontrar la causa y la solución.

A un niño en el supermercado le da una pataleta por una caja de galletitas, aunque ya hay un paquete de esas mismas galletitas en el carrito. Un niño pequeño pelea con sus padres por tratar de subirse a las barras del parque de juegos aunque son demasiado altas y gruesas. Estos niños tienen berrinches porque ellos no nos pueden decir que tienen hambre o están cansados o se sienten frustrados. Sus metas han excedido sus capacidades y el resultado es una erupción volcánica.

A medida que los niños maduran, desarrollarán una mayor tolerancia para esperar su turno y esperar por lo que quieren. Las circunstancias que producen esta demora tendrán sentido. Un niño que llega a enojarse porque un compañero de juego tomó un juguete requerirá que un adulto ayude a resolver la situación, pero el mismo niño de cinco años probablemente podrá esperar hasta que su hermana llegue en 1/2 hora para que la familia pueda cenar junta.

Otro aspecto del desarrollo social y emocional es la manera en que su niño juega con sus amigos. El juego de los niños con amigos debería progresar desde jugar a solas, a juegos paralelos cerca de un amigo, a juegos cooperativos. Evan juega solo, haciendo correr su automóvil a lo largo del piso, aunque está sentado junto a otro niño. Andrés es experto en reclutar amigos para estrellar automóviles contra la pared. Aunque los niños estrellan automóviles juntos, hay poca planificación o interacción. Están jugando cerca del uno al otro. Diana, que organiza a sus amigas para jugar a los títeres y poner una presentación, juega en colaboración. Cada niño tiene un papel diferente, y las palabras y las acciones se usan para negociar "quien hace que" y tomar turnos.

Todos los niños mezclan los juegos solos, paralelos, y cooperativos hasta alrededor de los cinco años. Después de esta edad, los niños que persisten en jugar solos, o al lado de otros niño más bien que interactuar pueden tener dificultades en esta área.

Jonathan y Catalina: un seguimiento

Los padres de Jonathan estaban preocupados de que su hijo era hiperactivo, una condición sobre la que habían leído en muchas revistas y periódicos. Decidieron que Jonathan fuera evaluado en una clínica de niños. Los resultados de la prueba fueron muy tranquilizadores. Jonathan era de hecho un niño muy intenso y de una energía muy alta, pero su comportamiento y capacidad para concentrarse estaba bien dentro de los rangos normales para un niño de su edad. Aunque muy aliviados, los padres de Jonathan decidieron que una consejería de apoyo los ayudaría a comprender sus necesidades y como llenarlas, así como también ayudarlos a ajustar sus propias expectativas y comportamiento. Además, encontraron un amigo de Jonathan que también era un niño activo y que disfrutaba yendo con Jorge al parque de juegos. Juntos, ambos niños escalaron y corrieron y saltaron y jugaron.

Los padres de Catalina tenían una Luz Roja seria en sus manos. Aunque inicialmente se sintieron reacios a considerar el comportamiento de Catalina como un problema, se dieron cuenta que Catalina iba a tener mayores dificultades más tarde y que iba a sufrir aún más rechazo de parte de sus compañeros. Mirando el desarrollo de Catalina hasta ese momento, sus padres encontraron algunos indicios que les ayudó a comprender sus agresivos exabruptos. Se dieron cuenta que Catalina había tenido infecciones recurrentes en los oídos y una nariz constantemente corriéndosele desde que tenían solo unos pocos meses de edad, con repetidos tratamientos de antibióticos prescritos por el pediatra. Sus padres decidieron consultar con un especialista en oído, garganta y nariz para evaluar completamente las crónicas infecciones y congestiones del oído de Catalina. Ellos sospechaban que el comportamiento de Catalina era resultado de un problema del oído, del idioma, o de locución. Un niño de cuatro años de edad que no oye bien o que no está usando la locución cómodamente puede sentirse suficientemente frustrado en una situación social como para recurrir a exabruptos agresivos. El especialista confirmó las dificultades de Catalina y trabajó con su familia para desarrollar un plan para manejar estos problemas.

Problemas de comportamientos en los niños pueden aparecer por una variedad de razones. El comportamiento agresivo de un niño puede tener un origen muy diferente al de un segundo niño. Los padres, profesores, y médicos deben ser buenos observadores y detectives para comenzar a determinar cuando deben preocuparse y como lidiar con el problema (vea "Observing - a major way of knowing your child" -- Observando - una manera primordial de conocer a su niño, Noviembre, 1996)

El ser padres presenta múltiples desafíos para sustentar el crecimiento y el desarrollo de los niños. Saber cuando prestar atención a una inquietud relacionada con el desarrollo o el comportamiento es una habilidad que puede aprenderse. La elaboración de un plan para obtener ayuda cuando se necesita es un don que los padres pueden ofrecerle a sus niños y a sí mismos.

Ellen Ferber, MSW, Ed.M., dicta conferencias y es instructora en desarrollo temprano de la niñez. Es instructora en la "Bank Street Affiliate Public School" de la Ciudad de Nueva York. Ms. Ferber es casada y tiene una hija de 7 años.

“Luces Rojas” durante el Desarrollo

Idioma y Locución

Hitos logrados tarde o saltados, carencia de locución o hablar muy poco, infecciones al oído recurrentes, dificultades para oír.

Desarrollo Motor

Hitos logrados tarde o saltados, caminar desmañado, debilidad en brazos y piernas (p.ej. caminar en punta de pies), movimientos atípicos (p.ej. sacudiendo las manos) y esquivar actividades motoras.

Desarrollo Cognitivo

Carencia de interés y capacidad con juegos, juguetes y acertijos en comparación con niños de su misma edad, lapso de atención pobre, dificultad para seguir instrucciones simples y cortas, llegar tarde a ciertos hitos o saltárselos.

Desarrollo Emocional y Social

Carencia de contacto directo a los ojos, dificultad para relacionarse con otros, cambios de ánimo súbitos y bruscos, tolerancia inusualmente baja para la frustración, rigidez o carencia de flexibilidad, y niveles de actividad inusualmente altos. Las relaciones con otros niños y adultos pueden ser distantes y algo disociadas.

Comportamiento

El comportamiento peligroso o

potencialmente de auto daño es una Luz Roja que no debe ser ignorada. El niño que se lastima a sí mismo repetidamente, o que habla de querer lastimarse a sí mismo, necesita atención. Un niño que está deprimido puede no aparecer triste o abandonado. Puede ser un niño que se ve muy enojado, come en exceso, salta desde el tope de una pared alta, o no sigue las precauciones normales que otros niños siguen.

Un padre que está preocupado por el desarrollo de su niño en cualquiera de estas áreas debe consultar con un profesional en salud mental o un especialista en niñez en una clínica u hospital donde el niño y la familia puedan ser vistos para una completa evaluación.

Si Está Preocupado

Si usted está preocupado por su niño, hay algunas estrategias básicas que le pueden ser útiles. Estas incluyen:

Mantenga un diario por dos semanas. Anote todos los ejemplos del comportamiento de su niño que le causan preocupación. Incluya una descripción del comportamiento y el tiempo, lugar, y las circunstancias de cuando ocurrió. Después de dos semanas, vea y busque si hay patrones de conducta en su comportamiento. La madre de María, preocupada por sus estallidos de genio, registró cuatro pataletas en dos semanas, todos en el supermercado antes de la hora de almuerzo. Ella decidió que quizás comprar temprano por la mañana sería más fácil para todos.

Intente determinar el marco del tiempo de su preocupación. ¿Empezó el problema recientemente? ¿Hace varios meses? ¿Hace varios años? ¿Se ha preguntado antes si acaso este aspecto del desarrollo de su niño es típico?

Cada vez que Ana, una burbujeante niña de tres años de edad recibe una invitación a una fiesta de cumpleaños le da una pataleta y rehúsa ir. Sus padres se sienten confundidos. Su comportamiento no se adecua al resto de su afable personalidad social. Después de pensarlo un poco, se dieron cuenta que todo comenzó cuando Ana tenía alrededor de 18 meses y "Barney" se apareció en una fiesta. La figura disfrazada aterrorizó a Ana y ella se desplomó en lágrimas, temblando y agarrando a su madre. Claramente, el comportamiento actual de Ana es resultado de su miedo y su dificultad para distinguir entre la fantasía y la realidad. Sus padres comenzaron a leer sobre la manera que los niños piensan y comprenden el mundo a diferentes edades y desarrollaron un plan para ayudar a Ana con sus temores.

Anote preguntas y sentimientos sobre lo que le preocupa. ¿Hay alguien más en su familia que exhibe este comportamiento o patrón de desarrollo? ¿Cómo se está sintiendo usted alrededor de aquello?

Haga un plan. Esto podría incluir consultar con un amigo, un pariente o un experto. Podría decidir investigar el comportamiento por dos o más semanas. Haga alguna investigación sobre el desarrollo de los niños leyendo artículos de revistas y libros para que lo ayuden a comprender cuales comportamientos son considerados comunes y normales para los niños. La abuela de Nataniel se preocupó cuando vino de visita de fuera de la ciudad. Su nieto de 10 meses recién empezaba a gatear, pero se arrastraba como un cangrejo. Se movía arrastrándose sobre sus nalgas, arrastrando una pierna detrás. Sus padres lo habían notado, pero pensaban que "se le iba a pasar". Después de discutirlo, la familia decidió buscar otros indicios de problemas de coordinación de movimiento y discutirlo con el pediatra. Ella lo observó gatear y sugirió que una terapeuta física debía ser consultada para corregir la coordinación muscular de Nataniel y fortalecer su control de los músculos.

Frecuentemente los padres tienen un fuerte deseo de considerar cualquier comportamiento difícil como una "fase transitoria". Es demasiado estresante y trastornador pensar que un niño podría tener un problema. A veces los pediatras no observan una señal de advertencia o "Luz Roja" porque las visitas de oficina son breves, o se limitan a la queja presentada ahora. Pero un comportamiento de Luz Roja persistirá a través del tiempo, presentándose a sí mismo una y otra vez para su consideración por los padres, la familia y los profesores que ven el niño en forma regular.

Recursos Locales en su Comunidad

Si usted sospecha que su niño tiene un atraso en el desarrollo, hay numerosos recursos en su propia comunidad donde usted puede encontrar ayuda. Estos incluirán:
Su Pediatra
Programas Para la Niñez Temprana tal como Head Start y Guarderías Infantiles
Escuelas Públicas
Centros de Salud Mental y Centros de Guía Para Niños ("Child Guidance Centers")
Centros de Intervención Temprana ("Early Intervention Centers")

Translated By:
Tikal Translations
212-569-6475

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER
NEWSLETTER

Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 12, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* October - 1997

Give Your Child A Head Start Through Art

As soon as my nieces, Tara and Christina, settle in for a visit, one of their first requests is always "Aunt Dawn, when can we make things?" They know this is a household which encourages and supports creativity. We always have a wealth of art supplies on hand, stored in a child friendly space for easy accessibility.

Each visit we add to my refrigerator door gallery and to their home gallery in the playroom. It is a joy to see the immense pleasure both take in exploring the media.

Adults often have a limited view of art. Far more than just drawing and painting, art is collage, modelling, crafts, paper mache and even decorating cookies and cakes. We also tend to focus on the final picture or drawing, but it is the doing that is critical. The rich experience of creating is more important than the finished product.

Discovering and Exploring is a Child's "Work"

Although experimenting with art may seem ike just another form of lay, that is how children xplore, discover and learn. This is a child's "work", and atisfaction, pride and ompetence blossom as hildren compose original ieces, master materials, and ee the results of their efforts. When respected and genuinely appreciated by adults, positive feelings flourish. Moreover, art encourages the development of a range of important skills and abilities.

Motor Skills

When preschoolers manipulate art materials, physical skills are strengthened and refined; particularly, fine motor ability and hand-eye coordination. This is crucial for young children as they learn how to write letters. In fact, writing often spontaneously emerges from art work. Typically, kids start with scribbles and haphazard marks on a page, progress to drawing circles, curves, and lines and then to letters.

Developmentally appropriate activities which enhance these skills include the use of clay and modelling dough to form shapes, cutting magazine pictures to make a seasonal theme collage and unstructured drawing with crayons or markers.

Language Skills

Young children's art both reflects and inspires language skills. As young children's abilities grow they often give names to their creations and even make up stories about the work. Parents can encourage this by writing down, and later reading back, these stories. You can also try writing a sentence together then drawing a picture to illustrate. Or, pick three words and use them as a theme for a picture. By doing this, your child will see the connection between words, art and stories and come to know words have meaning.

Children's vocabulary also matures as parents introduce new words to describe their experiences with colors, materials and textures. "Finger paint is smooth while the burlap for our nature collage is rough."

Creativity

When we think of a creative person, we generally think of a person with original ideas. Other creative qualities include flexibility, a willingness to try new things, and being inventive. Caring adults can nurture these fine qualities in young children through art.

In an environment that fosters creativity, children can make discoveries. Give your child tempera paints in the primary colors of red, blue and yellow and encourage her to combine them to make the colors of the rainbow. Try painting with natural things found on a hike such as evergreens, feathers, leaves, cattails and small branches. Each makes a different impression, has its own unique texture, and creates a special design. Explore other unusual painting materials such as sponges, string, even vegetables like corn-on-the-cob or broccoli. Ask your child what she thinks will happen if she uses a feather as a paint brush. This helps children learn the variety of effects they can create, and how the texture of materials differ and produce different effects.

Planning and Problem-Solving

Among the many benefits of art for the young child is the freedom to try out ideas. As children mature they begin to plan their art work and solve artistic dilemmas. They start to create with a purpose – whether as simple as deciding on a type of medium to use or as complex as designing the composition of a piece. Ask your child to find several favorite fall objects and arrange them in a pleasing way. Next, ask her to paint her interpretation of these real things using the medium, brushes and paper of choice. This encourages imagination, organization and planning skills.

Talking to Kids About Their Art

Art reinforces children's natural sense of wonder while helping them discover the magic of making things. All children are creative, imaginative and have artistic potential. Adults can nourish the creative spirit or inadvertently squelch originality by imposing adult standards on their art.

Instead, ask questions which encourage children to reflect on the process of their work such as "Tell me about the colors you chose", or "There are so many circles in this piece, how did you decide to use that shape?"

Don't show your child the "right" way to paint the sun or rainbow. There is no right or wrong way. Accept your child's creation without placing a value judgement on it. Let the artist create.

Finally, you can demonstrate your respect and appreciation for the tremendous effort your child has put into his art work by having an art gallery in your own home. It can be the refrigerator door, a wall in the kitchen, or child's room. If you mat the pieces they take on a more professional quality and your child will feel even more like an artist.

Dawn Marie Barhyte is a former preschool teacher and co-director of day care and Head Start centers. She currently works as a coordinator of a junior volunteer program. She is a poet and a freelance writer for educational and parenting publications.

Developmental Stages of Drawing

Children's skills progress through several stages of development, although each child goes at her own pace.

☛ **Disordered scribbling**

Beginning as young as 18 months, children begin to experiment with materials. They learn to hold a pencil and make marks on a page. As they gain more control over the muscles in their fingers and hands, they begin to try out lines, pressures and directions.

☛ **Controlled scribbling**

With practice they begin to form and repeat patterns and see designs in their pieces. Often letters will appear out of this "scribbling" and children may say they are "writing".

☛ **Naming an unplanned picture**

Children begin to see reality in their works, and assign names to their pictures. They don't necessarily plan creations, but when something emerges which sparks an association they decide that was what they painted or drew.

☛ **Representational drawing**

As children gain experience with materials and become more cognitively sophisticated, they begin to plan their pieces before beginning, and even sign them when finished.

Source: *Give Your Child the Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood* by Dianne Trister Dodge, Marlyn Goldhammer, and Laura Colker; Creative Associates International, Inc.; 1988; Washington, DC.

Dear Reader

One of the special pleasures of raising children is that they give us a legitimate reason to do the kinds of things adults rarely feel comfortable doing alone. An adult without a child at a petting zoo, a Muppet movie or a hands-on science museum is a bit of an anomaly. But put us alongside a youngster and we become free to enjoy ourselves. I feel the same way about art. I love to cut and paste, color and draw, arrange collages and make all kinds of projects. Since I lack the skill to produce anything people would actually want, I loved to do art projects with my son. Not only was this fun for me, but it was also good for him. In this month's issue, Dawn Marie Barhyte provides us with the reasons art is important for children as well as suggested projects to do with our kids.

Since October means Halloween, and "trick or treating", we've also included tips to help children have a fun-filled and safe holiday.

We here at *Parent & preschooler* hope you found our special expanded September issue helpful. Sometimes we just have more to say than fits into four pages. In 1998 we will be combining our July and August issues; however, because we feel it is important to provide a comprehensive look at major topics, we are planning more expanded issues over the course of the year.

As always, we look forward to your comments and suggestions so we hope you have completed and returned our Reader Survey.

Neala Schwartzberg

Setting Up an Art Area

The best way to promote creativity in preschoolers is to encourage spontaneous expression by offering and maintaining a wide range of art materials.

Painting
Easel (optional)
Large paper (newsprint, watercolor paper, construction, and drawing paper)
Brushes large/small
Variety of paints- finger paints, watercolors, temperas

Suggested Activity: Autumn Trees with Nature Brushes
Collect several of nature's materials like leaves, pine cones, small branches, and cat tails, or household materials like sponges, toothbrushes or fabrics. Draw an outline of a tree trunk on a large white paper. Then, using finger paints, ask your child to create as many fall colors as she can. Place the "found" materials in the paint and then on the paper using them as "printers" or brushes. Encourage him to feel the textures of the materials and notice how different each is from the other.

Drawing Materials
Pencils, pens, crayons, chalks, and markers in a variety of sizes and colors

Suggested Activity: Create a Nature Journal
Go on a nature hike through your neighborhood or to a nearby park and encourage your child to notice the signs of autumn and the changes from summer. Upon your return ask your child to recall the sights and sounds and recreate the hike through drawings. Save these as a field book for future outings.

Collage Items
Magazines, string, fabrics, wood, paper scraps, macaroni
Paste, glue
Cardboard
Safety Scissors

Suggested Activity: What I'm Thankful for Banner
With Thanksgiving right around the corner, you might want to try this project. For this particular activity, all your child will need are several old magazines. Talk with your child about the first Thanksgiving and what it means. Encourage him to cut out pictures depicting people, objects and experiences for which he is thankful. Make it a family activity by asking each member to add a few items to this theme collage. Display on Thanksgiving as a holiday decoration.

Sculpture
Clay And Modelling Dough - Store bought or homemade (see below)
Tools for shaping clay such as cookie cutters, objects which make impressions, rolling pin

Suggested activity: Halloween Goblins and Ghouls
For this activity use clay which is made to harden and paint.
After the modelling dough is ready to use, have a hoot creating Halloween critters, real and imagined. Encourage your child to make as many wild and weird creatures as she can. Complete them by painting with tempera paints. Later on, have a Halloween show, featuring your child's creatures.

➢ **Recipe for Hardening Paintable Modelling Dough**
2 cups corn starch
1 cup baking soda
1 cup water and food color of choice
Mix all ingredients into a large pot and cook over a medium flame, stirring constantly until it forms a ball. As the dough cools, knead. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

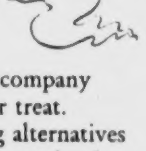
➢ **Recipe For Non-hardening Modelling Dough**
2 cups flour
1 cup salt
2 tablespoons oil
1 cup water with food color of choice
Mix all ingredients together and knead dough.
Store in a plastic bag.

Tips for Trick or Treat Time

As Halloween rolls around, parents start to think about helping their children have fun while still being safe. This is especially true for preschoolers.

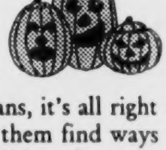
First, be sure that costumes fit well. They should not be too large or long. It is important to check to be sure that they are made of flame retardant fabrics and materials. When your child is wearing the costume be sure he has unobstructed vision and that he can breath and move easily. If your children are trick or treating in the evening, be sure that their costumes include reflective materials so that they can be easily seen.

Halloween can be a scary time for little ones. Never allow children to trick or treat alone and it may even be a good idea to accompany older kids as they trick or treat.



How about exploring alternatives to the traditional trick or treating in your community? Talk to schools, PTAs, girl or boy scout groups, or civic organizations about hosting a Halloween party with prizes, refreshments and games. Mom and Dad can join the fun as well.

Halloween is a time for fun, but should also be a time for common sense. If you feel uncomfortable with your children's plans, it's all right to say "no". Then help them find ways to enjoy the fun and still be safe.



DOCTOR'S CORNER

Ear Aches

It's a phrase that sends chills up the spine of every working parent rushing out late for an early morning meeting: "I've got an ear ache."

Middle ear infections, known medically as "acute otitis (*oh-TITE-is*) media", is one of the most common childhood ailments. Most cases are simply treated and leave no long-lasting effects. But without treatment, middle ear infections can cause serious problems.

Here's how the infections develop. A small tube, the eustation (*you-STAY-shun*) tube, connects the middle ear to the back of the throat and nose. A cold or allergy can block this tube allowing the fluid that normally flows through the tube to build up next to the middle ear. This fluid sometimes becomes infected by a bacteria or virus and puts pressure on the eardrum. That sensation can be painful and gives the "earache" its name.

Middle ear infections tend to develop between the ages of 3 months and 3 years and are more common in boys than in girls. Colds often lead to ear infections. Researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas say children in group childcare settings tend to have more colds than other children and may be at a greater risk of developing ear infections.

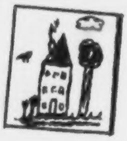
Middle ear infections are very common in young children and are usually easy to treat. The first step is to recognize the symptoms. Not all children will have the same symptoms but here are the most common. An earache is the first sign. Older kids can tell you their ears hurt and younger ones may tell you by appearing unusually irritable or crying often. They may not want to sleep because lying down may increase ear pain.

Ear infections are not the only cause of ear pain so look for these additional symptoms. A temperature between 100 and 104 degrees is another sign of an ear infection. Look for ear drainage. You might notice viscose white or yellow fluid coming out of the child's ear. It may smell bad and will look different from the earwax normally found in a child's ear. The child may feel a little better once the ear begins to drain, but that doesn't mean that the infection is gone.

The child may also experience some hearing problems during and after the ear infection. These problems can last several weeks. Basically, the fluid behind the eardrum blocks normal sound transmission in the ear. This condition usually goes away by itself. Doctors say it's important to see your pediatrician if your child has ear infection symptoms. The doctor will usually prescribe antibiotics. Make sure you follow the doctor's recommendations precisely and take all of the antibiotics, even after the symptoms go away.

This article is provided by Healthwatch and is intended only to provide general information. It does not replace the advice of a medical professional. Healthwatch is a Public Service of the Office of News and Public Information of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

Library Resources



For Halloween

🕮 ***The Pumpkin Patch*** by Elizabeth King; Puffin Books; New York, 1996. Detailed photographs and simple but informative text take the reader from seed to glowing jack-o'-lantern. An excellent book for kids who can't visit the pumpkin farm, as well as a 'refresher' for those who have visited.

For Budding Artists

🕮 ***The Picture that Mom Drew*** by Kathy Mallat and Bruce McMillan; Walker and Company; New York, 1997. Ever look at a finished drawing and wonder how it was created? This book provides an introduction to the elements of art used to construct a seaside picture of the artist's two daughters.

🕮 ***Making Things: The Handbook of Creative Discovery*** by Ann Sayre Wiseman; Little, Brown and Company; New York, 1997. *Making Things* has been revised and updated. This new edition combines the best of the earlier books, originally published in the 1970s. From soap sculptures and boats that float to printing with potatoes and even paper curls as mobiles, this book contains over 100 projects for kids (and adults!).

🕮 ***Loo-Loo, Boo, and Art You Can Do*** by Denis Roche; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1996. A good solid introduction to the many forms of art. Learn how to make bumpy paint with sand, glue and paint; design face masks; or any of the other projects described in this well-illustrated book.

🕮 ***Rain or Shine Activity Book*** by Joanna Cole and Stephanie Calmenson; illustrated by Alan Teigreen; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1997. Turn the pages and everyone can find something fun to do. Lots of ideas and creative suggestions for kids and parents.

🕮 ***Look Book***; by Tana Hoban; Greenwillow Books; New York; 1997. A beautiful book of color photographs that will delight young children. The photography serves, without words, to spur the imagination of all.

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of *North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center*
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER
NEWSLETTER
Pp Parent and preschooler
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 12, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* October - 1997

Dele a su niño una ventaja mediante el arte

Tan pronto como mis sobrinas, Tara y Cristina llegan de visita, una de sus primeras preguntas es siempre "Tía Dawn, ¿cuando podemos hacer cosas?" Ellas saben que este es un hogar que fomenta y apoya la creatividad. Siempre tenemos disponibles una cantidad de materiales para arte, guardados en un espacio de fácil accesibilidad para los niños.

En cada visita le agregamos nuevas obras a mi galería en la puerta del refrigerador y a su galería en la sala de juegos de su casa. Es un regocijo ver el inmenso placer que ambas sienten explorando los diferentes materiales.

Los adultos frecuentemente tienen una visión limitada del arte. Mucho más que simplemente dibujar y pintar, el arte es hacer collages, modelar, las artesanías, el papel maché y hasta decorar galletitas y tartas. También tendemos a enfocarnos en el dibujo o cuadro final, pero es el proceso lo que es crítico. La rica experiencia de crear es más importante que el producto terminado.

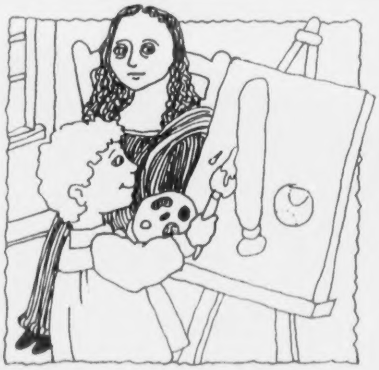
Descubrir y explorar es el "trabajo" de los niños

Aunque experimentar con arte pueda parecer simplemente como otra forma de juego, esa es la manera en que los niños exploran, descubren y aprenden. Es el "trabajo" de los niños, y la satisfacción, el orgullo y la capacidad florecen a medida que los niños componen piezas originales, adquieren maestría sobre los materiales, y ven los resultados de sus esfuerzos. Cuando son respetados y genuinamente apreciados por los adultos, los sentimientos positivos florecen. Además, el arte fomenta el desarrollo de una gama de capacidades y habilidades importantes.

Habilidades Motoras

Cuando los pre-escolares manipulan materiales de arte, sus habilidades físicas se fortalecen y se refinan; particularmente la capacidades motoras finas y la coordinación entre las manos y la vista. Esto es crucial para los niños pequeños a medida que aprenden a escribir letras. De hecho, frecuentemente el escribir surge espontáneamente del trabajo artístico. Típicamente, los niños comienzan con garabateos y rayas al azar sobre una página, avanzan a dibujar círculos, curvas, y líneas y luego a hacer letras.

Entre las actividades apropiadas para el desarrollo que mejoran estas habilidades, se incluyen el uso de la arcilla y pasta para modelar para hacer formas, cortar ilustraciones de revistas para hacer un collage de algún tema estacional, y un dibujo sin estructura con lápices de cera, marcadores, y lápices de colorear.



Habilidades del Lenguaje

El arte de los niños pequeños refleja e inspira las habilidades del lenguaje. A medida que sus capacidades crecen, los niños pequeños frecuentemente le dan nombres a sus creaciones y hasta construyen historias alrededor del trabajo. Los padres pueden fomentar esto escribiendo estas historias, y luego leyéndolas de vuelta. También pueden tratar de escribir una frase juntos con el niño y luego hacer un dibujo para ilustrarla. O, escoja tres palabras y úselas como tema para un dibujo. Al hacer esto, su niño verá la conexión entre las palabras, el arte y las historias, y aprenderá que las palabras tienen significando.

El vocabulario de los niños también madura a medida que los padres introducen nuevas palabras para describir sus experiencias con colores, materias y texturas. "La pintura para los dedos es suave mientras que la arpillera para nuestro collage es áspero".

Creatividad

Cuando pensamos en una persona creativa, generalmente pensamos en una persona con ideas originales. Sin embargo, otras cualidades de la creatividad incluyen la flexibilidad, un deseo de intentar con cosas nuevas, y ser inventivo. Los adultos solícitos pueden nutrir estas finas cualidades en los niños pequeños a través del arte.

En un ambiente que fomenta la creatividad, los niños pueden hacer descubrimientos. Déle a su niño pinturas de tempera con los colores primarios, rojo, azul y amarillo, e impúlselo a que los combine para hacer los colores del arco iris. Trate de pintar con cosas naturales encontradas en una caminata tales como siempre vivas, plumas, hojas, colas de gato y ramas pequeñas. Cada una hace una impresión diferente, tiene su propia textura única, y crea un diseño especial. Explore otros materiales inusitados para pintar, tales como esponjas, cordeles, incluso vegetales como maíz o brócoli. Pídale a su niño que piense que sucederá si él o ella usan una pluma como brocha. Esto le ayuda a los niños a aprender la variedad de efectos que se pueden crear, y como difiere la textura de los materiales y se producen efectos diferentes.

Planificación y Resolución de Problemas

Entre los muchos beneficios del arte para los niños pequeños está la libertad para tratar nuevas ideas. A medida que maduran, los niños comienzan a planificar su arte y resuelven dilemas artísticos. Comienzan a crear con un propósito – ya sea uno tan simple como decidir el tipo de medio a usar, o tan complejo como diseñar la composición de una obra. Pídale a su niño que encuentre varios objetos favoritos del otoño y arréglelos de una manera grata. Después, pídale que él o ella pinten su interpretación de estas cosas reales usando el medio, pinceles y papel de su elección. Esto fomenta la imaginación, organización y las habilidades para planificar.

Háblele a los Niños de su Arte

El arte refuerza el sentido natural de admiración de los niños mientras los ayuda a descubrir la magia de hacer cosas. Todos los niños son creativos, imaginativos y tienen potencialidad artística. Los adultos pueden nutrir el espíritu creativo o aplastar inadvertidamente la originalidad imponiéndole normas adultas a su arte.

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En vez de esto último, hágale preguntas que impulsen a los niños a reflexionar sobre el proceso de su trabajo, tales como, "Cuéntame sobre los colores que elegiste", o "Hay tantos círculos en este dibujo, ¿cómo fue que decidiste usar esa forma?"

No le muestre a su niño la manera "correcta" de pintar el sol o un arco iris. No hay una manera equivocada o correcta. Acepte la creación de su niño sin ponerle un juicio de valor. Deje que el artista cree.

Finalmente, usted puede demostrar su respeto y apreciación por el tremendo esfuerzo que su niño ha puesto en su trabajo artístico creando una galería de arte en su propio hogar. Puede ser la puerta del refrigerador, una pared de la cocina, o la pieza del niño. Si les pone una esterilla, las obras toman una calidad más profesional y su niño se sentirá aún más como un artista.

Etapas del Desarrollo en Dibujar

Las habilidades de los niños progresan a través de varias etapas de desarrollo, aunque cada niño avanza a su propio ritmo.

Garabateo Desordenado

Comenzando tan temprano como a los 18 meses, los niños comienzan a experimentar con materiales. Ellos aprenden a retener un lápiz y hacer marcas sobre una hoja de papel. A medida que adquieren más control sobre los músculos de sus dedos y manos, comienzan a intentar líneas, presiones y direcciones.

Garabateo Controlado

Con la práctica, los niños comienzan a formar y repetir patrones y a ver diseños en sus obras. Frecuentemente aparecerán letras de estos "garabateos" y los niños pueden decir que están "escribiendo".

Titulando un Dibujo no Planificado

Los niños comienzan a ver la realidad en sus trabajos, y le ponen nombres a sus cuadros. Ellos no planifican necesariamente sus creaciones, pero cuando algo surge que crea una asociación, deciden que eso era lo que querían pintar o dibujar.

Dibujos Representacionales

A medida que ganan experiencia con materiales y se ponen más sofisticados cognitivamente, los niños comienzan a planificar sus obras antes de comenzar, y hasta los firman cuando terminan.

Fuente: "The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood" (El Currículo Creativo para la Niñez Temprana) por Dianne Trister Dodge, Marlyn Goldhammer, y Laura Colker; 1988; Washington, DC.

Estableciendo un Area para el Arte

La mejor manera de estimular la creatividad en un pre-escolar es fomentar la expresión espontánea ofreciéndole y manteniendo una amplia gama de materiales de arte.

Atril para Pintar (optativo)
Papel grande (papel de diarios, papel para acuarela, papel de construcción, y papel de dibujo)
Pinceles grandes/pequeños
Variedad de pinturas - para pintar con los dedos, acuarelas, temperas

Actividad sugerida: árboles de otoño con pinceles naturales

Recopile varios materiales de la naturaleza como hojas, conos de pino, ramas pequeñas, y colas de gato. Dibuje la línea externa de un tronco de árbol sobre un papel blanco grande. Entonces, usando pinturas para usar con las manos, pídale a su niño que cree tantos colores de otoño como pueda. Ponga los materiales naturales en la pintura y luego sobre el papel usándolos como "impresoras" o pinceles. Impúlselo a sentir las texturas de los materiales y notar cuan diferentes son entre sí.

Materiales para Dibujar

Lápices, lapiceras, lápices de color, tizas, y marcadores en una variedad de tamaños y colores.

Actividad sugerida: crear un diario de la naturaleza

Salga a caminar por un camino natural e impulse a su niño a notar los signos del otoño y los cambios del verano. A su regreso pídale a su niño que recuerde las vistas y los sonidos y recree la caminata a través de dibujos. Guarde esto como un cuaderno de notas para excursiones futuras.

Artículos para Collage

Revistas, cordel, telas, madera, papel de desecho, macarrones
Pasta o goma de pegar
Cartulina
Tijeras de seguridad

Actividad sugerida: Cartel Sobre lo que Estoy Agradecido

Con el Día de Acción de Gracias a la vuelta de la esquina, usted podría querer intentar este proyecto. Para esta actividad particular, todo lo que su niño necesitará son varias revistas viejas. Hable primero con su niño sobre el Día de Acción de Gracias y qué significa. Impúlselo a cortar ilustraciones mostrando gente, objetos y experiencias por las cuales se siente agradecido. Hágalo una actividad familiar pidiéndole a cada miembro de la familia que agregue algunos artículos a este collage temático. Muéstrelo el Día de Acción de Gracias como una decoración festiva.

Escultura

Arcilla y Mezcla para Modelar
Comprada en el almacén o hecho en casa (vea más adelante)
Herramientas para formar arcilla tales como cortadores de galletas, objetos que hacen impresiones, uslero

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Actividad sugerida: Halloween, Duendes y Monstruos

Para esta actividad use arcilla, déjela endurecer y píntela. Después que la mezcla para modelar esté lista para usar, tenga una fiesta creando criaturas para el día de Halloween, verdaderas e imaginadas. Impulse a su niño a que haga tantas criaturas raras y salvajes como pueda. Termínelas pintándolas con pinturas de tempera. Después haga una exhibición sobre Halloween con las criaturas hechas por su niño.

Receta para Endurecer Pasta para Modelar y Pintar

2 tazas almidón de maíz
1 la taza de polvos para hornear
1 taza de agua y colorante de comida de su elección

Mezcle todos los ingredientes en una olla grande y cocínela a llama mediana, agitando constantemente hasta formar una bola. A medida que la masa se enfríe, amásela. Guárdela en un recipiente de plástico en el refrigerador.

Receta de Pasta para Modelar Blanda

2 tazas de harina
1 taza de sal
2 cucharadas de aceite
1 taza de agua con colorante para comida de su elección

Mezcle todos los ingredientes juntos y amáselos. Guárdelos en un recipiente de plástico.

Dawn Marie Barbyte es una ex profesora de pre-escolares y codirectora de centros infantiles y Centros de educación "Head Start". Actualmente trabaja como coordinadora de un programa de jóvenes voluntarios. Es poeta y escritora independiente de publicaciones educativas y de crianza de niños.

Translated By:
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
212-569-6475

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 12, Number 11 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November 1997

LANGUAGE GAMES

Giving Our Child the Key to Learning

The ability to understand and use language is perhaps the most important skill a child will ever develop. In all cultures, language is the medium for the exchange of information and feelings.

The way people perceive and react to children (and other adults) has much to do with their language. Children need to be able to express themselves in words in order to be part of a community and communicate with others.

Language is also crucial for cognitive skills. Planning and problem solving require language, and young children often 'think' out loud about what they are going to do next. Moreover, children's bility to use words verbally s related to their ability to earn and use written anguage. In school, children earn to read and write the words they have already earned to speak at home.

Language Development

Given its importance, it should come as no surprise that babies are prepared from birth to learn and use language.

- ***During the first six months of life*** babies begin to coo and then to babble. At first, babies will babble a few syllables, like "mamamama" or "babababa". Soon, however, a baby will babble in her parent's language. If baby's parents speak English, her babbles will grow to be different from those made by a baby whose parents speak Chinese or Russian.
- ***From about a year to 24 months***, children get ready for real language. They will build a rather limited vocabulary but use each word to stand for a whole sentence or thought. Then, at about 18 months, their vocabulary will explode. They will add new words and begin to combine them in very novel and charming ways. My little eighteen-month-old daughter said, "bye-bye hot" when her father covered the barbecue grill that she had been told was quite hot.
- ***Between two and three years*** of age children begin to be able to discuss abstract things, like feelings. They can use their words to communicate, telling us their stories, feelings and experiences. When my husband and I told our daughter that we had to go somewhere and leave her with a baby-sitter, she replied, "Maybe I cry." At least now we could talk about the situation.

Three-year-olds begin to tell narratives about things that happened to them, but they do so in a chaotic fashion. They leap back and forth in time giving a few of the highlights, but in a random order. They may even leave out crucial events.

At this age children also begin to systematically add endings to words. They have learned the rule for possessives and say "dog's" when looking at the dog's food bowl, but they overgeneralize. A three-year-old will add the "'s" ending and say "mine's" to indicate her possessions.

- ***By age five***, children generally can tell you a story in the order in which it happened. Unfortunately, they sometimes neglect to tell you the ending, leaving puzzled parents to ask "yes, and what finally happened?" Five to seven-year-olds are in transition, but by age seven your child can and will produce complete stories with the events in proper order.

The Parents' Role

Language and thought grow from the way we interact with our children. We talk to babies differently than we do older children and adults. We use shorter and more repetitive sentences with a higher pitched voice and exaggerated tone to draw their attention to the content of our sentences.

Through the simple daily activities and games we share with our babies we teach and reinforce the recognition of the sounds and patterns of speech. Through our conversations with toddlers and older children we provide the labels for objects, the words to express emotions, examples of the rules of grammar, and the concepts they use to think about their world. *(See "There's a concept behind that apple" October, 1996)*

Language games are a natural extension of that process. Although parents often make up games spontaneously with their youngsters, having a repertoire of 'ready made' games can be helpful. So, when you are sitting in a restaurant and your three-year-old is getting bored, or you are taking a car trip and your five-year-old is restless, or you simply want to do something fun with your eight-month-old – try a language game!

All of these activities are meant to be fun. If your child isn't enjoying a game, try a different activity. There is nothing to be gained from forcing a child to play any of these games. So, enjoy your child, and let the games begin!

IT'S GAME TIME

Birth to One Year

⇨ **Words and Deeds**: encourages your child to pay attention to language.

Make up action-word games such as warning your child that she is about to be tickled ("I'm going to tickle you"), or kissed ("Here is the kissing monster"), or raised up high in the air ("Up you go, then down again"). Of course, make up your own new ones or variations, like labeling a gesture of your child. One of the most popular is the baby wave. "Wave bye-bye to Mommy," "Wave to Daddy."

⇨ **Animal Noises**: encourages vocal imitation.

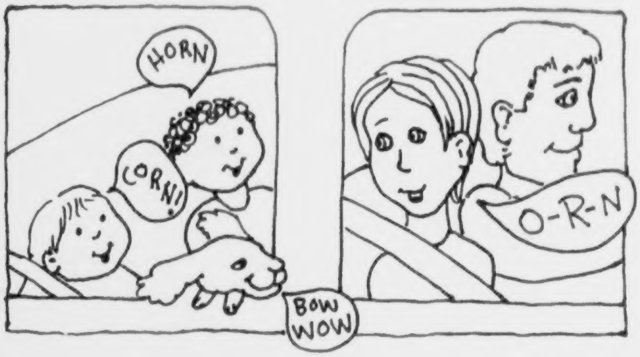
Page through a picture book of animals and imitate the sounds that each animal makes. Do make sure you use the same sound for each animal each time you play the game. As they get better at this, ask your child "What sound does a cow make?"

One to Two Years

⇨ **Words and Things**: encourages your child to associate word labels with objects.

Name an object and then talk about it while you draw your child's attention to it. If you have a cat you might say "Can you pet the kitty?" You can also point out the soft fur on kitty and kitty's long tail.

You can also name the things that your child points out. This is "mama's nose, this is Billy's nose." This is "daddy's finger, this is Shanna's finger."



When your child understand words for things ask her, "Where is the cat?" or "Where is your nose?"

⇨ **A B Soup**: teaches your child the letters of the alphabet.

Teach your child the name of one capital letter each day. Talk about it. Pick up magazines and take turns pointing to the objects beginning with the letter. As you ride in the car, see if your child can point out the 'letter of the day' in signs along the road.

Two to Three Years

⇨ **Slowly Quickly**: draws your child's attention to adverbs.

Go through an action sequence with your child. Do the action first, then ask your child to imitate you.

Walk slowly. Now walk quickly.

Talk slowly. Now talk quickly.

Run nicely. Now run wildly.

Dance nicely. Now dance wildly.

As a variation, use comparison phrases such as "stretch like a cat", or "sniff like a mouse."

⇨ **Once Upon A Time**: familiarizes your child with the structure of a story and encourages creativity.

Take turns making up a story about some object in sight. For example, point to a plane and say "Once upon a time, a little boy (or a little girl) took a plane. Where did he go?" You continue the story incorporating your child's responses into the narrative.

Three To Five Years

⇨ **Rhymes**: teaches your child about the sounds of words.

Take any word and name another word that rhymes with it. Then, have your child take a turn naming another rhyming word. For example, "Night rhymes with light. What's another word that rhymes with night?" Other good candidates for rhyming are 'can', 'nut', 'star', and 'bun'. The first person who cannot come up with a rhyme gets tickled, or kissed.

You can also select a word or word part and take turns with your child putting every letter of the alphabet in front of it. Some of the letters will make real words and some won't. Some good candidates are 'orn', and 'old'.

⇨ **Ritng**: encourages reading skills.

When your child has begun to read and write the letters of the alphabet, ask him to make up a little story spelling words in his own way. It may surprise you to discover that preschoolers are capable of writing because they invent spelling based on the sounds of letters.

Don't worry that such invented spelling will become a bad habit, just the opposite is likely to occur. The game gives your child practice in forming letters and a sense of the purpose behind writing.

⇨ **Opposites**: point out the relationship between words and their opposites.

This game can be played with two or three people. When played with three people, one becomes the moderator who gives the words for which the opposite (antonym) is needed. Whoever shouts out the first good antonym gets a point. Debates should be resolved by consulting a dictionary. Adding "not" in front of a word doesn't count.

For two players, you think up a word and ask your child to guess the opposite. If he comes up with an opposite he wins; if not, you win.

Five to Seven Years

⇨ **Pat Your Head, and More**: develops your child's memory.

Give your child a series of actions which she must do in that order. Adjust the number of actions to your child's developmental level. Give your four-year-old three things to do, but your six-year-old four things to do. For example, ask her to roll her eyes, snap her fingers three times, shuffle her feet, and make a fist.

⇨ **Cartoon Sort**: encourages your child to tell the events of a story in chronological order.

Take a newspaper cartoon which your child enjoys, cut it into individual frames and jumble it up. Hand the jumbled stack of frames to your child then ask her to arrange it in the right order and tell you the story. The first few times you play this game, you should read the story with your child before you cut it up. Also, begin with a cartoon that consists of only three or four frames.

⇨ **Points of View**: encourages your child to think about events from different perspectives.

After you finish reading a book, ask your child to describe how each character felt. This game encourages the ability to see another's point of view, and understand their emotions. It can also be an opportunity to encourage your youngster to develop your values and ideals. Select a story focusing on a dilemma and provide your perspective.

Allyssa McCabe, Ph.D. is a professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Massachusetts - Lowell, and mother of Jessamyn and Nicholas. She is also author of Language Games to Play with Your Child, Insight Books (Plenum Press), New York. 1992.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for responding to our Reader's Survey. If you haven't responded yet, please take a moment to do so. We really appreciate hearing from you!

Parent & preschooler Staff

Dear Reader

Thanksgiving has always been my favorite holiday. It's true, I love turkey and all the trimmings. But it is the 'giving thanks' which makes it such a beautiful celebration.

It's easy to find fault with parts of our lives, or with the people in our lives. Nothing is ever perfect. But even when life seems a bit bleak we can find something for which we can be grateful. Celebrating the good things in our lives is such a positive, life-giving experience. At Thanksgiving, let's take a moment to look around and say "thank you" for all the good things we have.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Neale Schwartzberg

The Doctor Is In...

Are there questions you've always wanted to ask a doctor? Are there topics you would like to learn more about? Now is your opportunity. Send us your questions, ideas and comments to:

The Doctor's Corner
Parent & preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
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The Development of Language

Children learn language from their parents and others in their environment. We feed, bathe, and amuse our children. We ask our babies: "What are you doing?" even when we know that they can't answer us. When our toddlers begin to talk, we encourage them by repeating what they said, often elaborating, labeling, and encouraging them to tell us more.

But not all parents do this to the same extent. Some families talk more than others; explaining things, answering questions. This, it turns out, makes a difference in our children's language. It fine tunes their vocabulary and points out subtle differences between words and their meanings. It provides them with more words that they can use to express their ideas. Red and pink are different colors. Shirts are different from sweaters. Puppies are baby dogs.

Does this make a difference? Absolutely. Although all children learn language, children exposed to a rich verbal environment read better, have a better vocabulary, and do better on tests of cognitive ability.

Talk to your child, right from birth. Comment on what you and your child are doing, even if you are just washing the dishes, or buttoning their sweater.

Listen to your child. If she asks you a question, stop what you are doing to focus on what she has to say. Repeat, confirm, expand, or even just acknowledge her contribution. Did she comment on the cat purring? You can talk about the sounds of contentment, or how purring can sound like a motor.

Ask questions to stimulate your child's thinking about the events and experiences in his life. What was he thinking last night when he heard the thunder? Was the cartoon character on TV silly?

Many parents will feel, soon enough, that their children no longer need them; but, in these first years, parents truly lead the way.

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Preschooler In the Kitchen Plus

Thanksgiving Thoughts

What words come to mind when you think of Thanksgiving? Turkey, stuffing, cranberries? Family, friends, football? Pilgrims, Indians, freedom?

What do you remember about Thanksgiving Day when you were growing up? We always had Thanksgiving at our house and I have wonderful memories of the preparation and our extended family get-together. And the food! It was the one time during the year my mom would bake homemade bread, roast the biggest turkey she could find (so we'd have plenty of leftovers) and put marshmallows on the candied sweet potatoes.

There is a history in this feasting day. It is an American event of which we can be proud, one in which people honor their freedom to worship in a way they choose. It is a holiday reminding us that we can learn from and celebrate with people of another culture. Pilgrims and Indians talked together, played together, ate together and gave thanks together.

The foods we associate with this meal are not necessarily the ones the Pilgrims and Indians ate in 1621. They ate whatever was nearby, or which would grow in the rocky soil. The actual menu included cod, sea bass, and possibly lobsters, clams and oysters, as well as wild turkey, duck, goose, and deer. Wild cranberries, currants, carrots, turnips, onions, cabbages and corn were also part of the celebration. Since most of the soil was too rocky to produce wheat the Indians taught the Pilgrims how to grow corn. Here is a recipe for cornbread using the corn kernel. It is easy to make with preschoolers since it is a quick bread. If you are using only one oven, be sure to bake it either before or after you roast the turkey as the temperature is much higher than needed for the turkey.

Corny Corn Bread

1 cup yellow cornmeal
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoons salt
1 cup milk
1/4 cup shortening
2 eggs
1 cup corn (8-oz can)

Heat oven to 425 degrees F. Your preschooler can help grease a 9x9 inch pan, and measure and stir the ingredients. Measure all ingredients into a large bowl. Stir until blended. Pour into pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cut into squares and serve warm with butter. Serves 12.

☞ Resources for this article:

- *Gobble: The Complete Book of Thanksgiving Words*, by Lynda Graham-Barber; illustrated by Betsy Lewin. Avon Camelot, 1993.
- *The Pilgrims' First Thanksgiving* by Ann McGovern; illustrated by Joe Lasker, Scholastic, Inc. 1973.
- *Eating the Plates: A Pilgrim Book of Food and Manners* by Lucille Recht Penner, Macmillan, 1991.
- *Exploring Autumn* by Sandra Markle, Avon Camelot, 1993.

Library Resources

🕮 ***Learn-to-Read Treasure Hunts*** by Steve Cohen; illustrated by Scot Ritchie; Workman Publishing; New York, 1997. These 50 engaging mini-treasure hunts encourage reading skills for children ages 5 to 7. The clues increase in difficulty as children's vocabularly and reading improves.

🕮 ***Martha Calling*** by Susan Meddaugh; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1994. When Martha the dog ate some alphabet soup something incredible happened; she learned to talk. Now, no one can stop her. But when she goes to the Come-On-Inn, she finds people who appreciate her.

🕮 ***Big Red Barn*** by Margaret Wise Brown; illustrated by Felicia Bond; HarperFestival; New York, 1995. Part of a series of classic books, the Big Red Barn engagingly presents concepts and vocabulary for young children.

🕮 ***What Color Was the Sky Today?*** by Miela Ford; illustrations by Sall Noll; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1997. Follow the sun and the colors of the sky throughout the day with this gentle book.

🕮 ***Tell Me a Season*** by Mary McKenna Siddals; illustrated by Petra Mathers; Clarion Books; New York, 1997. Bright colors and pictures teach children about seasons. A lovely picture book.

🕮 ***Turkeys, Pilgrims and Indian Corn*** by Edna Barth; illustrated by Ursula Arndt; Clarion books, New York, 1975. This oldie but goodie traces the history of Thanksgiving. Although aimed at an older reader, this can be a "read aloud" book for younger children.

🕮 ***Autumn***: An alphabet acrostic by Steven Schnur; illustrated by Leslie Evans; Clarion books; New York, 1997. Clever alphabet poems and colorful graphics tell the story of Autumn into winter.

🕮 ***Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen*** written and illustrated by DyAnne DiSalvo; Mulberry Books; New York, 1997. This is a very special book about a little boy who accompanies his uncle when he volunteers at a soup kitchen.

🕮 ***Pretend You're A Cat*** by Jean Marzollo, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney; Puffin Pied Piper Books; New York, 1990. This book will serve to help children learn to imitate the many creatures in nature. It is great exercise for young minds and bodies.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of *North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center*
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
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Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.

Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 12 Number 11 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November - 1997

JUEGOS DE LENGUAJE

Dandole a nuestro niño una llave para aprender

La capacidad para comprender y usar lenguaje es quizás la habilidad más importante que un niño pueda desarrollar. En todas las culturas, el lenguaje es el medio de intercambio de información y de sentimientos. La manera en que la gente percibe y reacciona a los niños (y a otros adultos) tiene mucho que ver con su lenguaje. Los niños necesitan poder expresarse a sí mismos con palabras a fin de ser parte de la comunidad y también para comunicarse con otros.

El lenguaje es también crucial para el desarrollo de las habilidades cognitivas. La planificación y la resolución de problemas requiere del lenguaje, y los niños pequeños frecuentemente "piensan" en voz alta sobre lo que van a hacer. Además, la capacidad de los niños de usar palabras verbalmente está relacionada con su capacidad para aprender y usar lenguaje escrito. En la escuela, los niños aprenden a leer y escribir las palabras que ya han aprendido a hablar en el hogar.

Desarrollo del Lenguaje

Dada su importancia, no debiera ser ninguna sorpresa que los bebés están preparados desde que nacen para aprender y usar lenguaje.

Durante los primeros seis meses de vida los bebés comienzan a arrullar y después a parlotear. Al comienzo, los bebés tartamudearárán unas pocas sílabas, como "mamamama" o "babababa". Pronto, sin embargo, un bebé balbuceará en el lenguaje de sus padres. Si los padres de un bebé hablan Inglés, sus parloteos serán diferentes a los de un bebé cuyos padres hablan chino o ruso.

Desde alrededor de un año hasta los 24 meses, los niños se preparan para el lenguaje verdadero. Construirán un vocabulario más bien limitado pero usan cada palabra como un pensamiento o una oración entera. Luego, alrededor de los 18 meses, su vocabulario estallará en cantidad. Ellos agregan nuevas palabras y comienzan a combinarlas de maneras muy novedosas y encantadoras. Mi pequeña hija de dieciocho meses dijo, "Adiós caliente" cuando su padre tapó la parrilla para hacer barbacoa, después de haberle dicho que estaba muy caliente.

Entre los dos y los tres años de edad, los niños empiezan a poder considerar cosas abstractas, tal como los sentimientos. Pueden usar sus palabras para comunicarse, contándonos sus historias, sentimientos y experiencias. Cuando mi esposo y yo le dijimos a nuestra hija que teníamos que salir y que la íbamos a dejar con la niñera, dijo, "Quizás llore". Por lo menos ahora podíamos hablar sobre la situación. Los niños de tres años comienzan a contar cosas que les suceden, pero lo hacen de forma caótica. Brincan de aquí para allá en el tiempo dando algunos de los puntos principales, pero al azar. Pueden hasta dejar fuera sucesos que son cruciales. A esta edad los niños también comienzan sistemáticamente agregarle finales a las palabras. Han aprendido la regla de los posesivos y dicen "plato perro" cuando ven el plato para comer del perro, pero generalizan demasiado.

A los cinco años, los niños generalmente pueden contar una historia en el orden en que sucedió. Desafortunadamente, a veces se olvidan de contar la conclusión, obligando a los confundidos padres a preguntar, "Bueno, ¿y qué pasó finalmente?" Los niños de cinco a siete años están en transición, pero a los siete años el niño puede relatar historias completas con los eventos en el orden apropiado, y lo hará.

El Papel de los Padres

El lenguaje y el pensamiento surjen de la manera en que nosotros interactuamos con nuestros niños. Nosotros le hablamos a los bebés de una manera diferente que a los niños mayores o a los adultos. Usamos oraciones más cortas y más repetitivas con una voz más alta y exageramos el tono para llamarles la atención al contenido de nuestras frases. A través de las simples actividades diarias y los juegos que compartimos con nuestros bebés, les enseñamos y reforzamos el reconocimiento de los sonidos y patrones del lenguaje. Mediante nuestras conversaciones con los niños pequeños y aquellos un poco más mayores, les proveemos de nombres y etiquetas para nombrar objetos, palabras para expresar emociones, ejemplos de reglas de gramática, y conceptos que usan para pensar sobre su mundo (ver "Hay un concepto detrás de esa manzana" Octubre, 1996). Los juegos que involucran el lenguaje son una extensión natural de ese proceso. Aunque los padres frecuentemente crean juegos espontáneamente con sus niños, tener un repertorio de juegos "preparados" puede ser útil. Entonces, cuando esté sentada en un restaurante y su niño de tres años empiece a aburrirse, o cuando su niño de cinco años se ponga inquieto en un viaje en automóvil, o simplemente quiera hacer algo divertido con su bebé de ocho meses -- ¡intente un juego de palabras! Todas estas actividades están supuestas a ser divertidas. Si su niño no disfruta de un juego, intente con una actividad diferente. Nada se gana forzando a un niño a jugar cualquiera de estos juegos. Disfrute de su niño, ¡y que comiencen los juegos!

ES TIEMPO DE JUGAR

Desde el Nacimiento a Un Año
Palabras y Hechos: estimula a su niño a prestarle atención al lenguaje. Invente juegos con palabras que involucren una acción tal como advertirle a su niño que usted le va a hacer cosquillas ("¡Te voy a hacer cosquillas!"), o que le va a dar un beso ("¡Aquí viene el monstruo a darte un beso!"), o que lo va a levantar en el aire ("¡A volar se ha dicho!"). Por supuesto, puede inventar sus propios juegos o variaciones, como darle un nombre a un gesto de su niño. Uno de los más populares es el gesto de despedida o de saludo del bebé. "Dígale adiós a mami", "Dígale hola a papi."

Los Ruidos de Animales: fomentan la imitación vocal. Mientras da vuelta las páginas de un libro ilustrado de animales, imite los sonidos que hace cada animal. Asegúrese de usar el mismo sonido para cada animal cada vez que juega el juego. A medida que el niño mejora en esto, pregúntele "¿Qué sonido hace una vaca?"

Uno a Dos Años

Palabras y cosas: impulse a su niño a asociar palabras con objetos. Nombre un objeto y luego hable sobre el, mientras enfoca la atención de su niño al juego. Si

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tiene un gato podría decir, "¿Puedes acariciar al gatito?" También podría hacerle notar la suave piel del gatito y su larga cola. También podría nombrar las cosas que su niño indica. "Esta es la nariz de mamá, esta es la nariz de Jorgito", "Este es el dedo de papi, este es el dedo de Pilar". Cuando su niño comprenda las palabras que significan cosas, pregúntele, "¿Dónde está el gato?", o "¿Dónde está tu nariz?"

Sopa de Letras: le enseña a su niño las letras del alfabeto. Enséñele a su niño el nombre de una letra capital cada día. Háblele de ella. Busque revistas y tome turnos indicando los objetos que comienzan con esa letra. Mientras pasea en automóvil, vea si su niño puede indicar la letra del día en los carteles a lo largo del camino.

Dos a Tres Años

Lenta y Rápidamente: atrae la atención de su niño a los adverbios. Haga una sucesión de acciones con su niño. Haga primero la acción, y luego pídale a su niño que la imite.
Camine lentamente. Luego camine rápidamente.
Hable lentamente. Luego hable rápidamente.
Corra correctamente. Luego corra desatinadamente.
Baile bien. Luego baile alocadamente.
Como variación, use frases de comparación como "estírate como un gato", o "olfatea como un ratón. "

Había Una Vez: familiariza a su niño con la estructura de una historia y fomenta su creatividad. Tome turnos inventando una historia sobre algún objeto a la vista. Por ejemplo, apunte a un avión y diga, "Había una vez, un pequeño niño (o una pequeña niña) que tomó un avión. ¿Adonde fue?" Continúe el cuento incorporando las respuestas de su niño dentro de la historia.

Tres a Cinco Años

Rimas: le enseñan a su niño sobre los sonidos de las palabras. Tome cualquier palabra y diga otra palabra que rime con ella. Luego dígale a su niño que diga otra palabra que rime. Por ejemplo, "Noche rima con coche. ¿Cuál es otra palabra que rima con noche?" Otras buena candidata para rimar pueden ser derroche. La primera persona que no puede salir con una rima se le hace cosquillas, o recibe un beso. También se puede seleccionar una palabra o parte de una palabra y tomar turnos con su niño poniendo cada letra del alfabeto al frente de ella. Algunas letras harán palabras verdaderas y otras no. Algunas candidatas buenas son "ala", y "ana".

Ritng: fomenta la habilidad para leer. Cuando su niño ha comenzado a leer y escribir las letras del alfabeto, pídale que invente una pequeña historia deletreando las palabras a su manera. Puede sorprenderse de descubrir que un pre-escolar es capaz de escribir, porque ellos inventan la ortografía en base a los sonidos de las letras. No tema que esa ortografía inventada vaya a transformarse en un mal hábito; es probable que ocurra exactamente lo contrario. Este juego le da a su niño una práctica en formar letras y sentido del propósito que hay detrás de escribir.

Opuestos: indique la relación entre las palabras y sus opuestos. Este juego puede jugarse con dos o tres personas. Cuando se juega con tres personas, una actúa de moderador y da las palabras para las cuales se requiere su opuesto (antónimo). Quienquiera que diga el primer buen antónimo consigue un punto. Las discusiones deberían resolverse consultando un diccionario. Para dos jugadores, usted piensa una palabra y le pide a su niño que adivine la opuesta. Si el niño sale con un antónimo él o ella ganan; si no, gana usted.

Cinco a Siete Años

Tóquese la Cabeza, y Más: desarrolla la memoria del niño. Déle a su niño una serie de acciones que deben hacerse en un cierto orden. Ajuste el número de acciones al nivel de desarrollo del niño. A un niño de cuatro años déle tres cosas que hacer, pero a un niño de seis años dele cuatro cosas que hacer. Por ejemplo, pídale que dé vuelta los ojos, se muerda sus dedos tres veces, cruce sus pies, y que haga un puño.

Reordenar la Historieta: alienta a su niño a contar los eventos de una historia en orden cronológico. Saque de un periódico una historieta que a su niño le guste, recórtela en cuadros individuales y barájelos. Entréguele la pila barajada de cuadros a su niño y pídale que la ordene correctamente y que le cuente la historia. Las primeras veces que juegue este juego, debería leer la historia con su niño antes de recortarla. También, comience con una caricatura que consista de solo tres o cuatro cuadros.

Puntos de Vista: estimula a su niño a pensar sobre los sucesos desde diferentes perspectivas. Después que termine de leer un libro, pídale a su niño que describa como se sentían cada uno de los personajes. Este juego fomenta la capacidad de ver el punto de vista de otro, y comprender sus emociones. También puede ser una oportunidad para estimular a su niño a que desarrolle sus valores e ideales. Seleccione una historia que enfoca en un dilema y provéale su propia perspectiva.

El Desarrollo del Lenguaje

Los niños aprenden el lenguaje de sus padres y de otras personas en su medio ambiente. Nosotros alimentamos, bañamos, y divertimos a nuestros niños. Le preguntamos a nuestros bebés: "¿Qué estás haciendo?", hasta cuando sabemos que no nos pueden contestar. Cuando nuestros niños comienzan a hablar, los alentamos repitiendo lo que dijeron, frecuentemente elaborando, rotulando, e impulsándolos a que nos cuenten más.

Pero no todos los padres hacen esto al mismo grado. Algunas familias hablan más que otras; explicando las cosas, contestando preguntas. Esto hace una diferencia en el lenguaje de nuestros niños. Afina su vocabulario e indica sutiles diferencias entre las palabras y sus significados. Les provee de más palabras que las que pueden usar para expresar sus ideas. Rojo y rosado son colores diferentes. Las camisas son diferentes a los suéteres. Los perritos son perros bebé.

¿Hace esto alguna diferencia? Absolutamente. Aunque todos los niños aprenden a hablar, los niños expuestos a un ambiente verbal rico leen mejor, tienen un mejor vocabulario, y les va mejor en las pruebas de capacidad cognitiva.

Háblele a su niño, desde el mismo nacimiento. Haga comentarios sobre lo que usted y su niño hace, aunque esté simplemente lavando los platos, o abotonándose el suéter.

Escuche a su niño. Si le hace una pregunta, deje de hacer lo que está haciendo y enfóquese en lo que el niño tiene que decir. Repita, confirme, expanda, o simplemente reconozca su contribución. ¿Hizo él o ella un comentario sobre el ronroneo del gato? Le podría hablar sobre los sonidos de satisfacción, o como el ronroneo puede sonar como un motor.

Haga preguntas para estimular a su niño a pensar sobre los eventos y experiencias de su vida. ¿Qué pensó anoche cuando oyó los truenos? ¿Era tonto el personaje de los monos animados de la TV?

Dentro de poco, muchos padres sentirán que sus niños ya no los necesitan más; pero, en estos primeros años, los padres verdaderamente son los guías.

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TRANSLATED BY:
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoft, CSW
Editor
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Layout and Design
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Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
Amy Houts
Illustrations
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Contributor
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year -- US$40
All Other Countries Add Postage

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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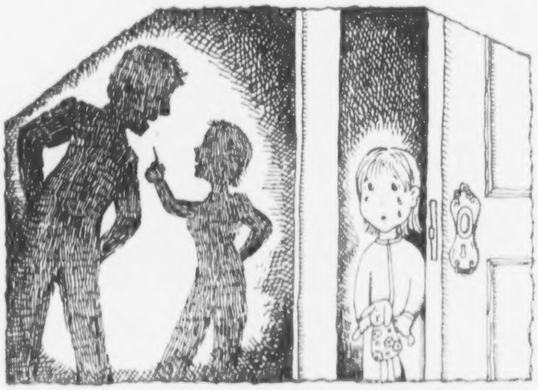
Volume 12, Number 12 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* December 1997

TAMING MARITAL CONFLICT

Claire, a five-year-old, is playing on the swings at the local park, but her attention is elsewhere. She is watching her three-year-old sister Amy walk carefully but surely along the low balance beam. As Amy reaches the end and jumps off, her parents, Susan and Jack, praise their younger daughter for her accomplishment. Claire, who has watched from several feet away, now runs over and pushes Amy out of the way. "I can do that even better," she announces, and walks quickly along the beam. Amy is crestfallen to have her triumph stolen, and Claire gets a "time out".

Although Susan and Jack wonder why Claire is so mean to Amy, they needn't look very far for an explanation. Just that morning on the way to the ark Susan noticed that the as level was dangerously ow. "I thought you were going to put gas in yesterday," she said, somewhat triumphantly. Privately she thought, "I'm not the only one who makes mistakes around here." Jack quickly replied, "If you hadn't screwed up the checking account, maybe I would have had time to do that." They rode the rest of the way in stony silence.

Maria, a six-year-old only child, is listening to her parents, Gary and Liz, fight. Liz accuses Gary of having an affair (which Liz knows to be true), and Gary lashes back about Liz's weight gain and lack of affection. As they fight, Maria creeps upstairs to the attic and imagines herself to be Cinderella, hoping that her fairy godmother will appear and whisk her away to a better life. But the fighting escalates until Gary pushes Liz out of his way and storms through the door, slamming it hard behind him. Now Maria imagines herself to be a dead princess, lying under glass, with her parents wishing she were still alive so they could show her how much they really loved her and were so sorry they caused so much trouble.



Susan and Jack, and Liz and Gary are locked in conflicts which are affecting their children. Conflict is a part of life and inherent in all relationships, but the way in which we handle conflict can either be a positive or negative influence on others in the family. In addition to learning ways to handle conflict itself, and the strong emotions that often accompany it, children can learn about honesty, courage and cooperation.

The real issue for Susan and Jack has nothing to do with gas or checkbooks, nor did the argument between Liz and Gary really center on their physical relationship. The remarks they make to one another have much more to do with their own insecurities and feelings of fear and hurt. Rather than addressing the important issues which really bother them, they fight about other issues and settle for an empty victory, not a resolution of underlying problems.

In destructive fighting there is little honesty and much exaggeration. Partners try to hurt, put down, or punish each other, while trying to protect and defend themselves. Both Susan and Jack feel insecure about themselves. Rather than supporting one another, they use a trick, putting the other down to make themselves feel superior. But this is only a temporary solution and the nagging insecurities return.

Liz and Gary are both struggling with their doubts that anyone could ever really care about them. Gary deals with this by having affairs and Liz pushes Gary away before he has a chance to reject her outright.

Destructive Fighting Affects Children

Claire somehow understands that her parents are in a contest to see who is the smarter and more capable. She has also picked up their idea that there can be only be only one competent partner and only one winner. So, when Claire saw Amy's success on the balance beam on the playground, she felt a jolt of insecurity. She felt she was losing a contest with Amy for her parents attention and approval, and ultimately, their love. Claire doesn't realize that she and Amy can be equally important in the family, each in their own unique way. Her parents can't teach her that. They don't feel or believe it themselves.

Maria is also scared when she hears her parents fighting because it sounds very hurtful and feels as if her parents may leave each other. This is one of the results of their conflict, but there are others as well. Because Gary and Liz doubt that they could be loved, it is hard for them to give Maria the feeling she is deeply loved. Maria feels scared and, not knowing what to do, she retreats into fantasy.

Children who are exposed to destructive fighting may become anxious or distracted, withdraw from social situations, or avoid other children.

Children who are exposed to destructive marital fighting may have other reactions. They may become anxious or distracted at home or at school. They may withdraw from social interactions, avoid playing with other children, or alienate their friends with their behavior. Parental conflict affects some children physically, producing stomach aches and vague complaints of not feeling well.

Sometimes children feel responsible for the fighting or for the aftermath. Every time Maria hears her parents fight, she fears that somehow she is the cause. Other children, whose parents might be troubled or depressed because of marital conflict, take it upon themselves to cheer up the parent.

Children may feel overlooked and ignored and try to draw parents' attention by being either very good or very bad. In the case of Claire, she became the "difficult child" while her younger sister Amy became a little "ray of sunshine."

When parents are engaged in chronic destructive fighting, they are often preoccupied and not fully "present" even when they are with their children. They don't truly pay attention and hear what their children are saying. As a result, their children may begin to feel that they don't deserve attention from their parents or from anyone else.

Children are not always able to voice their fears and feelings so their parents may be unaware of how their children feel. The reason for their behavior, their acting out, or physical complaints are ignored. As a result, children suffer in silence as both parents and child are too caught up in the parents' situation to pay enough attention to the child's needs.

Destructive conflict may even go so far as to threaten a child's sense of safety either in the family or in the outside world. This can easily be the case when conflict includes physical violence or the threat of violence. But even when it does not, children may imagine their parents to be in physical danger when one, or both, are in a rage. Children who experience these reactions may respond by becoming afraid of anger and conflict and attempt to avoid them. Either of these reactions interferes with their ability to make satisfying relationships with peers and adults, and later on, with their own spouses and children.

In trying to avert these problems, some parents may attempt to avoid conflict altogether by pretending that there are no disagreements or nothing is really bothering them. When conflicts are silent and go "underground," children often feel the tension but have no way of understanding the situation. They become anxious and confused and they miss the opportunity to learn more productive ways of coping with conflict. They also get a very unrealistic picture of family life. "We never fought in our family" is not a statement about healthy families. It is usually a statement about avoidance and fear.

Finally, when negative emotions are suppressed so are positive emotions. As a result, children are likely to see their parents' marriage drained of passion and caring. There is no fighting, but there is no joy.

Constructive Fighting

In constructive conflict, participants express their feelings honestly, listen to one another, attempt to see the other's point of view, and come to a solution. There may be some heated emotion and even raised voices, but there is no desire to hurt the other person. Children learn crucial lessons from these types of fights. They learn that it is possible to argue with someone even if you love them deeply, and that people need to communicate what is important to them. They come to realize that each person's actions and behavior affects the other. They also learn that constructive fighting can be about growth.

Learning to Fight More Constructively

Children learn much from parents about creating and maintaining good relationships, and about using their strong emotions in productive ways. We, as parents, can teach these lessons through our handling of marital conflict.

Here are some concrete suggestions for constructive fighting.

- **Start with yourself.** This is absolutely critical. When you feel yourself getting angry at your partner, look beneath the anger to discover its underlying cause. Remember that much of our anger is a result of feelings of hurt or fear. Are you hurt by something your partner did? Did your partner trigger a feeling of insecurity? Do you then want to get back at, punish, or put your partner down?
- **Express your feelings directly and honestly.** It is okay to be angry, but it is not okay to be destructive and hurtful. Describe the specific behavior that bothers you, without name-calling or exaggeration, and explain why it bothers you. Don't say "You are so insensitive. I can't believe you forgot when to come home." This is an example of explicit name-calling (insensitive) and implicit name-calling (liar). Instead, you might say, "When you don't come home on time it feels as if you don't think I am very important and everything else comes before me."

When parents are engaged in chronic destructive fighting, they are often preoccupied and not fully "present" even when they are with their children.

- **Discuss the situation.** After you express your feelings, you and your partner need to talk about the problem. If it has been a continuing issue, a quick apology – "You're right, I'm sorry, and I'll never do it again" – may not be very satisfactory. Instead of settling for an easy resolution, talk fully about the underlying issues.

Explore why it is so hard to admit a mistake.

- **Stay calm.** If you find yourself moving into destructive patterns, stop the discussion and take time to calm down. Then you can resume talking in a more constructive way.
- **Talk to your children.** If your children witness the fighting, whether constructive or destructive, talk to them afterwards about their thoughts and feelings. If you think you behaved badly, apologize to them for your behavior, without disparaging the other person or putting them down.
- **Physical aggression should never be tolerated.** If you threaten, use, or receive physical violence, get professional help immediately. Whether children are the victim of violence or a witness to violence, it is equally devastating and dangerous.

Note: The examples in this article are based on actual cases, but the names have been changed.

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Dear Reader

Even before the calendar page flips to December it seems the toy and gift frenzy begins. The television shows seem to step up their advertising and four-color circulars begin to appear in the newspaper telling me about the wonderful gifts I should buy. Everyone begins to focus on what presents to buy for whom. We make lists and gratefully check off each item. The barrage makes it hard sometimes to remember the meaning of the holiday season. Yet the gifts which we remember most fondly are the ones which come from the heart, rather than the store. A few years ago my son gave me a book of coupons for the household chores which were my responsibility, but which I often wished weren't. One set in particular was for the late night dog walk. Even on those nights when I changed into my pajamas and curled up in bed with a book, I knew sooner or later I'd have to put on clothes and go out and walk the dog. My son could have bought me a gift, but this one was far more special. Each time I turned in my coupon, one at a time, and my teenage son went off to do "my" chore, I remembered his thoughtfulness and caring. No gift meant more, or was a better symbol of the giving of the season.

It's easy to get lost in the glitz and lose sight of the important things. But it's important to remember that long after the expensive toys have broken, the perfume is used up, and no one really cares about the matching shirt and tie, the gifts which come from the heart, with love and thoughtfulness, will still be there, even if it is only in our memories.

Peace to all.

Neala Schwartzberg

Library Resources

SPECIAL NOTE: 🕮 ***A Safe Place*** by Maxine Trottier; illustrated by Judith Friedman; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, Ill.; 1997. This is the story of a little girl who must learn to cope with domestic violence at home. It is one of the new genre of children's books that deal with very intense emotional issues.

🕮 ***Light the Candle! Bang the Drum!*** by Ann Morris; pictures by Peter Linenthal; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1997. A colorful book depicting the festivals celebrated around the world. Notes at the end provide a description of each of the holidays.

🕮 ***Jewish Holiday Crafts for Little Hands*** by Ruth Esrig Brinn; illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn; Kar-Ben Copies, Inc.; Rockville, MD, 1993. A complete year of crafts, activities and games for each of the Jewish holidays. It includes directions for making menorahs, dreidels and Hanukkah gifts.

🕮 ***Melly's Menorah*** by Amye Rosenberg; Simon & Schuster; New York, 1991. The Gopher family is about to celebrate Hanukkah, and Melly has been left out of the preparations. She's just too little. But when the family can't find the menorah, it is Melly who brings out the menorah she made of cookie dough.

🕮 ***The Story of Kwanzaa*** by Donna L. Washington; illustrated by Stephen Taylor; HarperCollins; New York, 1996. Created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa is a festival celebrating African America. This beautifully illustrated book explains not only the festival, but also the history of its creation.

🕮 ***Seven Days of Kwanzaa*** by Ella Grier; pictures by John Ward; Viking; New York, 1997. A beautifully illustrated day-by-day celebration of Kwanzaa, from the first day of unity to the seventh day of faith. Several recipes are also included.

🕮 ***An Alcott Family Christmas*** written and illustrated by Alexandra Wallner; Holiday House; New York, 1996. This unusual book is based on the life of Louisa May Alcott. The Alcotts give away their special Christmas dinner to a less fortunate family because the joy of the holiday comes from their enduring love for each other.

🕮 ***Waiting for Christmas*** by Monica Greenfield; illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist; Scholastic Press; New York, 1996. A Christmas poem, richly illustrated, is the basis of this book on the anticipation of Christmas.

🕮 ***Christmas With Teddy Bear*** by Jacqueline McQuade; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1996. Mixing large print simple words with smaller print elaboration and warm drawings makes this book about a Teddy Bear anticipating Christmas a sweet story for young children.

🕮 ***Arthur's Christmas*** by Marc Brown; Little, Brown & Company; New York, 1984. While Arthur agonizes over the right gift for Santa, his sister D.W. is busy making up a long list of the gifts she wants. But at the end, she is touched by Arthur's concern and understands that the real spirit of Christmas is caring about others.

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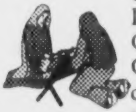
Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

Winter Holidays

Eerdma celebrated Christmas in the Philippines much the same as we do in the United States, but there were some distinctive differences. "In the Philippines, when I went caroling door to door, there was an unspoken request for money for the church," she remembers. Although Eerdma married an American and moved to the United States years ago, she still misses the large family gatherings she attended as a child when a roasted pig on a spit was holiday fare.

Several holidays are celebrated in December: Christmas, the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ; Hanukkah, the Jewish holiday of the festival of lights; and a relatively new holiday, Kwanzaa, celebrating the bounty of the earth. These winter holidays are perhaps the most anticipated, most prepared for and most loved by people around the world. In Mexico Los Posadas (The Inns) is celebrated for nine nights by a parade of people knocking on doors to see if there is any room at the inn for Mary to have her baby. Children have the chance to hit a pinata, a clay or paper mache animal filled with gifts and candy. From Spain, twelfth night (twelve nights after Jesus' birth) commemorates the time when the three Wise Men came to give gifts to Jesus.



You might try adding or adopting new activities and recipes to your holiday plans, perhaps one of the following festival foods.

Potato Latkes (pancakes)

(Latkes are fried in oil to remind the Jewish people about the small jar of oil that burned for eight days. These crisp, savory pancakes are served with applesauce and can be a meal itself.)

4 potatoes
1 onion
1 tsp salt
1 egg
3 tablespoons flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 cup oil
applesauce

Peel and grate the potatoes. Drain by pressing in a sieve. Grate onion. Mix potatoes, onion, salt, egg, flour and baking powder. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Fry spoonfuls of the mixture until brown on both sides. Drain. Serve hot with applesauce. Serves four.

Ensalada de Nochebuena

(Christmas Eve Salad)

1 head lettuce
4 bananas
8 small cooked beets
4 oranges
3 limes
4 apples
32-oz can of pineapple chunks (drained)
1/4 cup sugar (optional)
seeds of 2 pomegranates
1 cup salted peanuts
1/2 cup salad oil
1/4 cup cider vinegar

Slice the beets, bananas. Peel the oranges and limes and slice. Wash the apples and slice. Chop the peanuts. Tear the lettuce into bite-size pieces. Place the lettuce in a serving bowl. Let your preschooler arrange the fruits and vegetables on top, leaving the pomegranate seeds and peanuts until last. Sprinkle with sugar if desired. Mix oil and vinegar, pour over salad just before serving. Serves 8.

Benne Cakes

(Benne means sesame seeds and these West African cakes, are eaten for good luck.)

Oil to grease cookie sheet
1 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup butter softened
1 egg, beaten
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/2 cup flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
1 cup toasted sesame seeds

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly oil a cookie sheet. Mix together the brown sugar and butter and beat until creamy. Stir in the egg, vanilla extract, and lemon juice. Add the flour, baking powder, salt and sesame seeds. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto the cookie sheet two inches apart. Bake for 15 minutes or until the edges are browned.

❄ Resources:

Latkes and Applesauce: A Hanukkah Story by Fran Manushkin, illustrated by Robin Spowart, Scholastic, Inc., 1990.
Sunset Mexican Cookbook, Sunset Publishing Company, 1991
The Story of Kwanzaa by Donna Washington, illustrated by Stephen Taylor, HarperCollins, 1996.

✎ *We Heard You ...*

First, we know that you are busy and we want to thank you for taking the time to answer our survey. What did we learn? Well, we learned that you really like the features but also that you like our latest addition, **The Doctor's Corner**. So, we'll be alternating that with **Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus. Library Resources** was also popular and in response to your requests, we'll be adding the price of the book and whether we reviewed a soft- or hard-cover copy.

We also heard that you are interested in science and learning activities and we'll be including more of those too.

Our yearly index seems to be very useful. If you missed the 1996 index, just send us a note and we'll be happy to send one to you. These come in very handy when you are looking for information on a specific topic.

Finally, your comments have made our day much brighter and your suggestions are helping us make the ***Parent & preschooler Newsletter*** more responsive to your needs and concerns.

Thank You!

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of *North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center*
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 12, Number 12 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* December - 1997

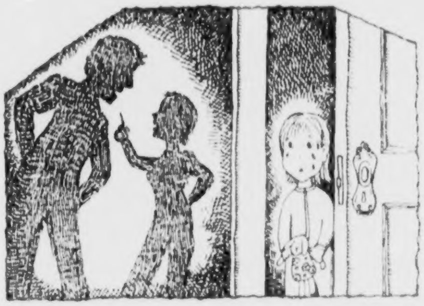
COMO DOMAR EL CONFLICTO MARITAL

Clara, una niña de cinco años, juega en los columpios del parque local, pero su atención está en otra parte. Ella está observando a su hermana de tres años, Ana, quien camina con cuidado pero con seguridad a lo largo de una viga de balance. Cuando Ana alcanza el final de la viga y salta abajo, sus padres, Susana y Diego, felicitan a su hija menor por su logro. Clara, quien ha estado mirando desde varios metros de distancia, corre y empuja a Ana a un lado. "Yo puedo hacerlo mejor", anuncia, y camina rápidamente a lo largo de la viga. Ana se siente abatida de que le hayan robado su triunfo, y Clara se consigue una penitencia por castigo.

Aunque Susana y Diego se preguntan por qué Clara es tan cruel con Ana, no necesitan buscar muy lejos para encontrar una explicación. Solo esa mañana en camino al parqüe Susana notó que el nivel de gasolina (en el automóvil) estaba peligrosamente bajo. "Yo pensaba que le ibas a poner gasolina ayer", dijo ella, algo triunfante. Privadamente ella pensó, "No soy la única que comete equivocaciones aquí". Diego rápidamente contestó, "Si no hubieras revuelto la cuenta de cheques, quizá hubiera tenido tiempo para hacerlo". Y viajaron el resto del camino en un pesado silencio.

María, hija única de seis años, escucha a sus padres, Gonzalo y Isabel, pelear. Isabel acusa a Gonzalo de tener una aventura romántica (que Isabel sabe que es cierto), y Gonzalo responde reprendiendola severamente por su aumento de peso y carencia de afecto. Mientras ellos pelean, María sube gateando al desván y se imagina a sí misma como Cenicienta, rogando que se le aparezca su hada madrina y se la lleve lejos a una vida mejor. Pero la pelea aumenta hasta que Gonzalo empuja a Isabel fuera de su camino y sale dando un fuerte portazo. Ahora María se imagina a sí misma que es una princesa muerta, yaciendo debajo de un cristal, con sus padres deseando que ella estuviera viva todavía para mostrarle cuánto realmente la aman y lo tristes que se sienten por haber causado tantos problemas.

Susana y Diego e Isabel y Gonzalo están enfrascados en conflictos que afectan a sus hijos. El conflicto es una parte de la vida y es inherente en todas las relaciones, pero la manera en que manejamos el conflicto puede ser una influencia positiva o negativa sobre los demás miembros de la familia. Además de aprender maneras de manejar el conflicto por sí mismo, y las fuertes emociones que frecuentemente lo acompañan, los niños pueden aprender sobre honestidad, coraje y cooperación.



La verdadera cuestión para Susana y Diego no tiene nada que ver con gasolina o chequeras, como tampoco el argumento entre Isabel y Gonzalo se centra realmente en su relación física. Los comentarios que se hacen el uno al otro tiene mucho más que ver con sus propias inseguridades y sus sentimientos de miedo y dolor. En vez de enfrentar las cuestiones importantes que realmente les molestan, pelean sobre otras cosas y aceptan una victoria vacía más bien que una resolución de los problemas subyacentes. En peleas destructivas hay poca honestidad y mucha exageración. Los participantes tratan de lastimarse, rebajarse, o castigarse el uno al otro, mientras tratan de protegerse y defenderse a sí mismos.

Tanto Susana como Diego se sienten inseguros con respecto a sí mismos. En vez de apoyarse el uno al otro, usan un truco, rebajando al otro para poder sentirse superiores ellos mismos. Pero esta es solo una solución temporaria y las insistentes inseguridades vuelven. Isabel y Gonzalo están ambos pugnando con sus incertidumbres de que alguien realmente podría quererlos. Gonzalo lidia con esto teniendo relaciones extra maritales e Isabel empuja lejos a Gonzalo antes que este tenga la oportunidad de rechazarla directamente.

LAS PELEAS DESTRUCTIVAS AFECTAN A LOS NIÑOS

Clara de algún modo comprende que sus padres están en una competencia para ver quien es el más sabio y más capaz. También ha recogido la idea de que puede haber solo uno que sea competente y ganador. Por lo tanto, cuando Clara vio el éxito de Ana sobre la viga de balance en el parque, sintió un golpe de inseguridad. Sintió que perdía una competencia con Ana por la aprobación y la atención de sus padres, y finalmente, su amor. Clara no se da cuenta que ella y Ana pueden ser igualmente importantes en la familia, cada una a su manera única y propia. Sus padres no le pueden enseñar eso. Ellos no lo sienten ni lo creen ellos mismos.

María también se siente asustada cuando oye a sus padres pelear porque esto suena muy nocivo y siente como que sus padres puedan separarse. Este es uno de los resultados de su conflicto, pero hay otros también. Porque Gonzalo y Isabel dudan de que ellos podrían ser amados, es difícil para ellos darle a María el sentido de que es amada profundamente. María se siente asustada y no sabiendo que hacer, se refugia en la fantasía.

Los niños que están expuestos a peleas maritales destructivas pueden tener otras reacciones. Pueden ponerse ansiosos o distraídos en el hogar o en la escuela. Pueden rehuir la interacción social, evitar jugar con otros niños, o alienar a sus amigos con su comportamiento.

El conflicto paternal afecta a algunos niños físicamente, produciendo dolores de estómago y quejas indefinidas de no sentirse bien. A veces los niños se sienten responsables por las peleas o por sus consecuencias. Cada vez que María oye a sus padres pelear, teme que de algún modo ella es la causa. Otros niños, cuyos padres podrían sentirse inquietos o deprimidos a causa de conflictos maritales, toman sobre sí mismos la tarea de alentar a sus padres. Los niños pueden sentirse descuidados e ignorados, e intentan atraer la atención

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de sus padres siendo o muy buenos o muy malos. En el caso de Clara, ella llegó a ser la "niña difícil" mientras que Ana, su hermana menor, se convirtió en un pequeño "rayo de sol".

Cuando los padres se enfrascan en crónicas peleas destructivas, frecuentemente se ven preocupados y no totalmente "presentes", hasta cuando están con sus niños. No prestan atención verdaderamente y no escuchan lo que sus niños dicen. Como resultado, sus niños pueden comenzar a sentir que no merecen la atención de sus padres o de nadie más. Los niños no siempre son capaces de expresar sus temores y sentimientos, por lo que sus padres no saben como ellos se sienten. La razón de su comportamiento, sus malas conductas, o sus quejas físicas son ignoradas.

Mientras los padres y el niño están demasiado atrapados en la situación de los padres como para prestarle suficiente atención a las necesidades del niño, los niños como resultado sufren en silencio. El conflicto destructivo puede llegar tan lejos como hasta amenazar el sentido de confianza de un niño en la familia o en el mundo externo. Esto puede fácilmente ser el caso cuando el conflicto incluye violencia física o la amenaza de violencia física. Pero aun cuando no hay violencia, los niños pueden imaginar que sus padres están en peligro físico cuando uno, o ambos, están encolerizados.

Los niños que vivencian estas reacciones pueden responder llegando a temer los enojos y los conflictos e intentando evitarlos. Cualquiera de estas reacciones interfiere con su capacidad para crear relaciones satisfactorias con sus compañeros y adultos, y más tarde, con sus propios niños y cónyuges.

Al tratar de prevenir estos problemas, algunos padres intentan evitar enteramente los conflictos pretendiendo que no hay desacuerdos o que nada los molesta realmente. Cuando los conflictos son silenciosos y "subterráneos", los niños frecuentemente sienten la tensión pero no tienen manera de comprender la situación. Se ponen ansiosos y confundidos y pierden la oportunidad de aprender maneras más productivas de lidiar con los conflictos. También obtienen un cuadro muy poco realista de la vida familiar. "Nosotros nunca peleamos en nuestra familia" no es una declaración muy saludable sobre una familia. Es comúnmente una expresión evitación y de miedo.

Finalmente, cuando se suprimen las emociones negativas también se suprimen las emociones positivas. De esta manera, los niños probablemente ven el matrimonio de sus padres vacío de pasión y amor. No hay peleas, pero tampoco hay regocijo.

PELEANDO CONSTRUCTIVAMENTE

En el conflicto constructivo, los participantes expresan sus sentimientos honestamente, se escuchan el uno al otro, tratan de ver el punto de vista del otro, y llegan a una solución. Pueden haber algunas emociones acaloradas y hasta voces levantadas, pero no hay deseo de lastimar a la otra persona. Los niños aprenden lecciones cruciales de estos tipos de peleas. Aprenden que es posible discutir con alguien aunque se les ame hondamente, y que la gente necesita comunicar lo que es importante para ellos. Ellos llegan a darse cuenta que las acciones y el comportamiento de cada persona afecta a la otra. También aprenden que la pelea constructiva puede derivar en crecimiento.

APRENDIENDO A PELEAR MÁS CONSTRUCTIVAMENTE

Los niños aprenden mucho de sus padres sobre crear y mantener buenas relaciones, y sobre como usar sus fuertes emociones de maneras productivas. Nosotros, como padres, podemos enseñarles estas lecciones mediante nuestro manejo del conflicto marital. Estas son algunas sugerencias concretas para pelear constructivamente.

***Comience consigo mismo**. Esto es absolutamente crítico. Cuando se sienta que se está enojando con su pareja, mire debajo de su enojo y descubra su causa subyacente. Recuerde que mucho de nuestro enfado resulta del sentirse herido o de sentir miedo. ¿Se siente usted herido por algo que hizo su pareja? ¿Provocó su pareja un sentimiento de inseguridad? ¿Quiere usted entonces vengarse, castigar, o rebajar a su pareja?

***Exprese sus sentimientos directa y honestamente**. Está bien enojarse, pero no está bien ser destructivo y dañino. Describa el comportamiento específico que le molesta a usted, sin palabras insultantes ni exageración, y explique por qué le molesta. No diga "Eres tan insensible. No puedo creer que te olvidaste de cuando tenías que regresar a casa". Este es un ejemplo de una acusación explícita (insensible) e implícita (mentiroso). En vez, usted podría decir, "Cuando no regresas a casa a tiempo siento como que yo no soy muy importante y que todo lo demás viene antes que yo".

***Discuta la situación**. Después de expresar sus sentimientos, usted y su pareja necesitan hablar sobre el problema. Si ha sido una cuestión continua, una disculpa rápida -- "Tienes razón, lo siento, y no lo haré nunca más" -- no es muy adecuado. En vez de quedarse en una resolución fácil, hable a fondo sobre las cuestiones subyacentes. Explore por qué es tan difícil admitir una equivocación.

***Manténgase tranquilo**. Si se encuentra inclinándose a patrones destructivos de comportamiento, pare la discusión y tómese un tiempo para calmarse. En ese momento podrá reanudar la conversación de una manera más constructiva.

***Háblele a sus niños**. Si sus niños son testigos de la pelea, ya sea constructiva o destructiva, hable con ellos después sobre sus pensamientos y sentimientos. Si piensa que se comportó mal, discúlpese ante ellos por su comportamiento, sin menospreciar la otra persona o rebajarla.

***La agresión física no debe tolerarse jamás**. Si usted amenaza, usa, o es víctima de violencia física, busque ayuda profesional inmediatamente. Es igual de devastador y peligroso que los niños sean víctimas de la violencia o testigos de la violencia.

Nota: Los ejemplos en este artículo son basados en casos reales, pero los nombres fueron cambiados.

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Translated By:
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
*North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center*
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
Editor
Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D
Layout and Design
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ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to
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LECTI/NSC&FGC
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U.S.Phone: 1-[illegible]0-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
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(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year - US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year - US$40
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 1 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* January - 1998

TEACHING CHILDREN THE VALUE OF MISTAKES

The famous inventor, Thomas Edison was once asked "How did you feel about your 10,000 failures before you finally invented the light bulb?" Edison replied, "I didn't have any failures. I learned 10,000 things that didn't work. Each one of those discoveries gave me valuable information that eventually led to success." These setbacks didn't end Edison's quest for the light bulb. He understood that they were part of the process of success.

Fear of Mistakes

Little children have no concept of "mistake." If they fall while learning to walk, or spill something while reaching towards the milk hey may cry or become rustrated, but they never hink, "I'm a failure. I'd better not try again because I just can't do it right." Unfortunately, adults have often developed this attitude towards mistakes and can pass this negative message on to our children.

When we give children these negative messages we often mean well. We may be trying to motivate them to do better, but let's stop for a moment to think about the long-range effects of our sometimes "mistaken" messages about mistakes. When children are taught that making mistakes means that they have failed or are inadequate they lose the courage to take risks, try something new, or challenge themselves. Their fear of failure stops them from even making an attempt.

Other children become very creative at hiding their failures in order to avoid criticism. Is this healthy for children? Do these messages inspire patience and persistence, or teach them how to solve problems and cope with failure? Of course not. It's crucial to teach children that mistakes aren't just errors, but rather wonderful opportunities to learn and succeed.

WAAK! CLEAN IT UP! CLEAN IT UP!

How to Help Young Kids Learn

The first step is to make sure children feel safe. Young children will avoid admitting a mistake if they fear the result will be punishment or disapproval. Instead, say "It's okay. You made a mistake. We all do that." Next, tell them "Let's pretend we're detectives and see what we can learn from it."

A great way to help kids learn is to stop *telling* and start *asking*. Too often adults *tell* children what is wrong and what the child should do about it. It is much more respectful, and inviting of learning and persistence, when we *ask* questions rather than provide answers or criticisms. What happened? What does the child think caused it? What lesson can the child learn? Or what ideas does the child have to solve the problem? This is the true meaning of education. Too often adults try to "stuff in" information rather than lead children into learning.

Three-year-old Elijah spilled his milk. Instead of getting angry, his father helped him correct the mistake by saying, "Whoops! Do you know where the sponge is so you can clean this up?" Elijah ran to the cupboard under the sink, got a sponge and happily soaked up the milk. When the milk started to drip from the sponge, his Dad asked, "What do you need to catch the dripping milk?" Elijah thought about it for a minute, and then found the bucket under the sink. His Dad then suggested that he could squeeze the milk from the sponge into the bucket and then soak up more milk. It would have been quicker and neater for Dad to simply clean up the milk, but instead he made the time to help his son solve the problem.

The learning continued after the milk was cleaned up. Dad asked, "What happened that caused the milk to spill?" Elijah decided the glass was too full and too close to the edge of the table. Dad then asked, "What could you do to keep that from happening again?" Elijah looked like he had just made a great discovery and said, "I could not pour so much milk in my glass and put it behind my plate." Dad replied, "Good thinking. You learned a lot from that mistake."

Parents can also offer possible suggestions phrased as "What if" questions, encouraging their youngsters to think about and evaluate the situation.

Maria was riding her tricycle around the patio. One of her wheels got stuck behind the wooden picnic table. She started to cry in frustration. Her mother asked her, "Maria, what do you think would happen if you got off your bike and backed it up?" Maria stopped crying and thought about that possibility. Then she decided to get off her bike and try it. Soon she was on her way with a happy smile.

Notice that her mother asked Maria to think about what would happen if she got off the bike and backed it up instead of just telling her to do it. While it would have been much easier for Mom to rescue Maria, this would not teach Maria that she is capable of solving her problems. Nor would it invite her to think about what caused her mistake and what she can do about it.

Elijah and Maria are receiving healthy messages about mistakes. Their parents are helping them discover that mistakes are opportunities to learn.

When Mistakes Aren't Mistakes

Sometimes what looks like a mistake is really developmentally appropriate exploration. Watching your child drop objects over the side of the high chair or draw with lipstick instead of crayons can be very annoying, but this behavior is part of the development of young children.

Other times, a child's behavior reflects a lack of skills. Children put their shoes on the wrong feet, or put the wrong finger in the thumb part of their mitten. They don't yet realize that left and right feet are different, or how mittens work. Here again, parents can ask questions and provide hints. You can hold the mitten next to your child's hands to help him see the best place for the thumb.

The Reluctant Child

Some children may be reluctant to answer questions about mistakes. They don't believe you really will listen and respect their point of view. They fear you will use the information against them. Suppose a child trying to open a plastic container accidently spills the contents on the floor. If her mother or father berates her, do you think it likely that she will be able to learn anything positive from this experience? In fact, might this child deny she had anything to do with the mess on the floor? Unfortunately, children may begin to lie to protect themselves when they believe they will be punished for mistakes and accidents.

Suppose Elijah's father became angry and yelled at him for spilling the milk; would Elijah have learned how to clean up spills or how to prevent them? Instead he would learn to be afraid of having accidents and his parents finding out about them. He may decide it is better not to try to do things, hide his mistakes, or blame someone else.

Learning Questions

When parents focus on learning from situations, children become more open to admitting difficulties and looking for solutions. Here are some questions for you to use with your child to learn from his mistakes. Think about which would help encourage your youngster to analyze her experiences and learn from them:

✦ What were you trying to accomplish?
✦ What happened?
✦ What caused it to

When Children Lie

We can't really talk about mistakes without talking about lying. Lying is something parents always ask about, and it is very connected to how children feel when they make mistakes, and are caught. Here are some things to keep in mind when you are trying to make sense of your child's behavior.

✦ Is It Really A Lie?

A four-year-old who swears that the chocolate milk on the living room couch isn't his, even though he is still holding the glass, needs a gentle approach. Preschoolers who deny the obvious facts are probably trying to protect some very vulnerable feelings. Parents shouldn't worry that the young child who occasionally lies is deceitful. All young children lie. For children, the lie is a way to prevent shame and embarrassment - it's not the truth that hurts, but the blame and humiliation that come with it.

✦ You Already Know the Answer.

By the time most parents ask "Is that the truth?", they have a good suspicion that it isn't. If you've seen your six-year- old sneak a cookie, or steal his brother's baseball card, don't argue with your child when he denies it. Assume you're right and let your children believe you have eyes in the back of your head. If you need to discipline them use appropriate consequences, such as: "Those cookies were for dessert, I guess you won't have any later", or "When your brother asks me where his new baseball card is, I'll let him know that I saw it in your room." There are usually enough to get the point across.

✦ Don't Fight the Wrong Battle.

Don't get stuck in battles of trying to pull the truth, as we see it, from our children. Children will get more stubborn, tired, and even scared. We punish them, not for the mistake, but for not telling the truth, and the real issue gets lost in the fight. Four year old Nicki didn't realize that the magic marker he was using would soak through the paper and stain the carpet beneath. It didn't take long for his mother to notice and become angry at him. Nicki immediately denied that he had anything to do with the stain and was sent to his room, punished for lying not for making the stain - which was truly accidental. Scared four year olds are not great communicators, and Nicki was unable to face his mistake, and his mother's upset feelings. His lie was a way of pretending that something bad did not happen.

✦ What to Do?

We have to address the mistake and help our children realize that when mistakes happen there are ways of correcting them, and lying is not necessary. Children need to know that we are there to help them find ways to turn mistakes into learning experiences and that hiding a mistake by lying only blocks them from learning important lessons.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW

➤ continued from page 2.

happen?

- ✦ How do you feel about what resulted?
- ✦ What ideas do you have for solving the problem?
- ✦ How can you use what you have learned to prevent the problem in the future?

We want to help our children understand that mistakes are opportunities to learn important life skills. Our children may not grow up to be another Thomas Edison, but they can learn that mistakes aren't really failures, they are another chance to succeed.

Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., is the author and co-author of eleven books, including Positive Discipline for Preschoolers, and Positive Discipline A-Z.

Dear Reader

I don't know how the tradition of New Year's resolutions started, but I have mixed feelings about it. I heartily approve of taking stock of one's life and behavior. There is much to be gained from looking back over the past year and seeing where we shone and where we could use a bit of polishing. I suppose the result of that self-examination could be a list of things we resolve to do in the future. But too often what results is a wish list of things we'd like to do but rarely seem able to accomplish. We have goals, but sometimes forget we also need to specify how we are going to accomplish them, or to allocate the time and effort to follow those steps.

What are your goals for the New Year? How do you plan to reach them? Whatever they are, why not share your experiences with other *Parent & preschooler Newsletter* parents? Let us know what you hoped to accomplish and how you achieved them. Throughout the year we'll publish some of your accounts to celebrate your success and let everyone know that with effort and persistence, goals became reality.

Have a happy and healthy New Year!

Neala Schwartzberg

Library Resources

📖 ***Sleep Safe, Little Whale***; by Miriam Schlein; illustrated by Peter Sis; Greenwillow Books, New York; 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. This is a hard-board, pull-out book; on one side of the pull-out are beautifully depicted animals and their babies, while the back reveals pretty drawings of animal scenes; a sweet book.

📅 ***Exploratorium - A Year of Discoveries***; by Ellen Klages; illustrated by Thorina Rose; Chronicle Books, California; 1997; Hardcover/Wire-O-Binding, $16.95. This wonderful calendar is a great source of science activities for the whole year. Each month offers easy science experiments and information to attract a child's curiosity.

📅 ***Make Your Own Calendar 1998***; illustrated by Sue Dennen; Little, Brown and Company, New York; 1997; Softcover, $6.95. This is a calendar for kids to make themselves, coloring in the borders, creating their own monthly picture, and using 198 full-colored stickers for special dates.

📖 ***Happy New Year, Pooh!***; by Kathleen W. Zoehfeld; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press, New York; 1997; Hardcover, $11.95. Pooh and the inhabitants of the Hundred-Acre Wood write a poem to say goodbye to the old year. Their sadness turns to happiness when they discover a party to welcome the new year.

📖 ***January Rides the Wind***; written by Charlotte F. Otten; illustrated by Todd L.W. Doney; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York; 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. Intense images are featured as each month is depicted in free verse celebrating the beauty of the seasons.

📖 ***Winter Visitors***; written by Elizabeth Lee O'Donnell; illustrated by Carol Schwartz; Morrow Junior books; New York; 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. A counting book about the forest animals that decide to "visit" a little girl as she returns from a walk in the winter woods.

📖 ***Look to the North: A wolf pup diary***; written by Jean Craighead George; illustrated by Lucia Washburn; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. Lyrical prose tells the story of three wolf pups as they grow to be young adults. Beautiful illustrations add to the magic - a delight for parent and child.

📖 ***If I Had a Horse***; written by Jonathan London; illustrated by Brooke Scudder; Chronicle Books; San Francisco, 1997; Hardcover, $13.95. A poetic book with strong visual images enhanced by vivid illustrations. It describes a young girl's imaginary ride...if she had a horse.

📖 ***Big, Scary Wolf***; by Harvey Stevenson; illustrated by Harvey Stevenson; Clarion Books, New York; 1997; Hardcover, $14.00. This is the story of a little girl who was afraid of the dark. With tenderness and humor, an imaginary wolf helps her with her nighttime fears.

📖 ***The Jacket I Wear In the Snow***; by Shirley Neitzel; illustrated by Nancy Winslow Parker; Mulberry Big Books, New York; 1997; Softcover, Oversized, $18.95. This book is suitable for reading to a group. Rhyme follows rhyme as layer after layer of winter clothing is first put on and then taken off.

📖 ***Pooh Welcomes Winter***; by Kathleen W. Zoehfeld; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press, New York; 1997; Hardcover, $11.95. Pooh and his friends try to bring a snowman indoors to a party. They soon discover just what winter is all about.

📖 ***Edmund and the White Witch***; by C.S. Lewis (From *The Chronicles of Narnia*); illustrated by Deborah Maze; HarperCollins Publishers, New York; 1997; Hardcover, $12.95. This classic book, illustrated with rich, detailed paintings, is the story of the beautiful white witch of Narnia. Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy discover Narnia when they step through a magical mirror.

The Doctors Corner

MEDICATIONS

As a pediatrician with a large practice, I am often asked questions about medication. Here are some questions frequently asked by concerned parents.

• ***Question: I've been reading about problems with kids taking too many antibiotics. Is that a problem?***

Unnecessary use of antibiotics definitely is a problem. As with any medication, there are specific reasons to use antibiotics, and in those specific situations they can be very helpful. However, when used excessively, antibiotics can create difficulties for both the patient receiving them as well as society at large. For the individual patient, the risk of side effects is real and significant. Many side effects are somewhat minor and self-limited. The most common ones with antibiotics include diarrhea, skin rash, and nausea. However, some are more severe. The most significant and immediate allergic reaction, known as anaphylaxis, causes difficulty breathing, paleness, shock, and even death.

Additionally, using antibiotics in situations where they are not warranted encourages the development and emergence of other germs. Some of these may create new diseases in the same patient such as diarrhea, thrush or vaginitis. These germs may also begin to circulate among the general population and be very difficult to treat. Doctors are finding new germs which have learned to live with almost every antibiotic known to humankind. These resistant "super germs" can become a very serious problem, and their presence is a direct result of the overuse of antibiotics.

• ***Question: Sometimes when I go to my pediatrician and my son is sick, she doesn't prescribe any medication. Why not?***

Part of your physician's job is to recognize those illnesses which are potentially serious or will be made better faster by medication. Each illness has its own "natural history," the course it will take if left untreated. Most acute illnesses of childhood are self-limited, meaning that your child will get better with or without specific medication. Prescribing medications which are unnecessary will not shorten the duration of your child's illness and increases the risk of side effects. Your doctor is providing you with excellent service by taking the time to consider all the possibilities and making an individual judgement as to whether or not medication will help your child.

• ***Question: Why do I have to keep my daughter on an antibiotic even after she is feeling better? Why can't I stop it?***

The duration of antibiotic treatment for illnesses vary and is subject to change based on new medical research. Some treatment regimens once accepted (e.g. 10 days of antibiotics for ear infections) have now been proven to be excessive. Sometimes, the duration of treatment or choice of treatment appears to make little sense, although the medical reasons behind it are well-established. For example, because strep throat is caused by bacteria, it is treated with an antibiotic. However, children with strep throat generally have symptoms for a period of 48 hours, whether they are treated or not. Thus, if your doctor takes a throat culture and calls you two days later to tell you that your child has strep and he wants to prescribe antibiotics, by this time your child will generally be well, yet she needs antibiotics. In this case, antibiotics are prescribed not only to treat the strep currently in the throat but to prevent the delayed complications of strep throat, for example, rheumatic fever. We know that a complete course of treatment is necessary (generally 10 days) to prevent this disease.

Duration of antibiotic treatment for other conditions is variable, however, do not discontinue a course of therapy without consulting your doctor.

Other times, throat infections are caused by a virus. Children with viral infections often remain ill for longer than 48 hours, but these infections don't respond to antibiotics. If your child's throat culture was negative for strep, the doctor will tell you that it is a viral infection and that your child needs no antibiotic. Although your child may continue to be ill, no medicine will make him or her better faster.

• ***Question: My friend's pediatrician provides homeopathic and herbal remedies. Are these proven effective and safe?***

Many alternatives to conventional, or allopathic, medicine are currently being explored. This area is often called "complementary medicine" because the techniques and treatments used complement traditional allopathic medicine. However, it has not been subject to conventional scientific study. Thus, there is no way of predicting how your child's condition will respond to most herbal and homeopathic treatments. In general these treatments in small doses are not harmful and may even help. However, please check with your conventional physician prior to embarking upon a course of alternative medicine therapy. Something as seemingly benign as giving warm honey and tea to an infant could be responsible for transmitting the spores of botulism, a life-threatening disease. Your physician should be your ally in considering what therapeutic approaches are right for your family.

Dr. Ron Marino is the Director of General Pediatrics at Winthrop University Hospital and Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Long Island.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 1 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* **January 1998**

ENSEÑÁNDOLE A LOS NIÑOS EL VALOR DE SUS ERRORES

En cierta ocasión le preguntaron al famoso inventor, Thomas Edison "¿Cómo se siente sobre sus 10.000 fracasos antes de finalmente haber inventado la bombilla eléctrica?" Edison contestó, "Yo no tuve ningún fracaso. Yo aprendí 10.000 cosas que no funcionaban. Cada uno de esos descubrimientos me dieron valiosa información que eventualmente condujeron al éxito". Estos reveses no terminaron la búsqueda de Edison de la bombilla eléctrica. Él entendió que eran parte del proceso del éxito.

El Miedo a las Equivocaciones

Los niños pequeños no tienen concepto de 'error'. Si se caen mientras están aprendiendo a caminar, o derraman algo mientras alcanzan la leche, pueden llorar o frustrarse, pero nunca piensan, "Yo soy un fracaso. Haría mejor en no tratar nuevamente porque simplemente yo no puedo hacerlo bien". Desafortunadamente, los adultos frecuentemente tienen esta actitud hacia las equivocaciones y pueden transmitirle este mensaje negativo a los niños.

Cuando le damos a nuestros niños estos mensajes negativos generalmente tenemos buenas intenciones. Podemos estar tratando de motivarlos a hacerlo mejor, pero paremos por un momento, para pensar sobre los efectos de largo alcance de nuestros a veces, "equivocados" mensajes, con respecto a las equivocaciones. Cuando a los niños se les enseña que cometer equivocaciones significa que han fracasado o que son inadecuados, ellos pierden la valentía para tomar riesgos, intentar algo nuevo, o desafiarse a sí mismos. Su miedo al fracaso los para hasta de hacer un intento.

Otros niños llegan a ser muy creativos para ocultar sus fracasos a fin de evitar críticas. ¿Es esto saludable para los niños? ¿Inspiran estos mensajes paciencia y tenacidad? ¿Les enseña como resolver problemas y lidiar con el fracaso? Claro que no. Es crucial enseñarle a los niños que las equivocaciones no son solo errores, sino que oportunidades más bien maravillosas de aprender y triunfar.

Como Ayudar a los Niños Pequeños a Aprender

WAAK! CLEAN IT UP! CLEAN IT UP!

El primer paso es asegurarse que los niños se sienten seguros. Los niños pequeños evitarán admitir una equivocación si temen que el resultado será un castigo o la desaprobación. En vez, dígale "Está bien. Cometiste una equivocación. Todos hacemos eso". Luego dígales, "Hagamos como que somos detectives y veamos que podemos aprender de esto".

Una gran manera de ayudar a aprender a los niños es parar de decir y comenzar a preguntar. Demasiado frecuentemente los adultos le dicen a los niños lo que está mal y lo que debería hacer al respecto. Es mucho más respetuoso y estimulante a aprender y a tener tenacidad, cuando les hacemos preguntas en vez de darles respuestas o críticas. ¿Qué sucedió? ¿Qué piensa el niño que ocasionó el problema? ¿Qué lección puede aprender el niño? ¿O qué ideas tiene el niño para resolver el problema? Este es el verdadero significado de la educación. Demasiado frecuentemente los adultos tratan de "meterles" información en vez de guiar a los niños a aprender.

Elías, de tres años, derramó su leche. En vez de enojarse, su padre lo ayudó a corregir el error diciendo, "¡Upa! ¿Sabes donde está la esponja para que puedas limpiar esto?" Elías corrió a la alacena debajo del lavaplatos, trajo una esponja y feliz empapó la leche. Cuando la leche comenzó a gotear de la esponja, su papá le preguntó, "¿Qué necesitas para pescar la leche que está goteando?" Elías lo pensó por un minuto, y entonces encontró el balde debajo del lavaplatos. Su papá le sugirió entonces que estrujara la leche de la esponja en el balde y que entonces empapara más leche. Habria sido más rápido y más pulcro que el papá simplemente limpiara la leche, pero en vez él se dio el tiempo para ayudar a su hijo a resolver el problema.

El aprendizaje continuó después de que la leche se limpió. El papá preguntó, "¿Qué sucedió que hizo que la leche se derramara?" Elías decidió que el vaso estaba demasiado lleno y demasiado cerca del borde de la mesa. El papá entonces preguntó, "¿Qué puedes hacer para evitar que suceda nuevamente?" Elías daba la impresión de haber hecho un gran descubrimiento y dijo, "Yo podría no verter tanta leche en mi vaso y ponerlo detrás de mi plato". El papá contestó, "Bien pensado. Aprendiste mucho de esa equivocación".

Los padres también pueden ofrecer posibles sugerencias expresadas como preguntas "¿Qué pasaría si..?". Estas preguntas pueden fomentar a los pequeños a pensar sobre una situación y evaluarla.

María estaba andando en su triciclo de plástico alrededor del patio. Una de sus ruedas se atascó detrás la mesa para picnic. Ella comenzó a llorar de frustración. Su madre le preguntó, "María, ¿qué piensas que sucedería si te bajaras del triciclo y lo echaras para atrás?" María paró de llorar y pensó sobre esa posibilidad. Entonces decidió bajarse del triciclo e intentarlo. Pronto estaba andando de nuevo en su triciclo con una sonrisa de felicidad en su cara.

Note que su madre le pidió a María que pensara sobre lo que sucedería si ella se bajara del triciclo y lo empujara para atrás en vez de simplemente decirle lo que tenía que hacer. Y aunque hubiera sido mucho más fácil para la mamá rescatar a María, esto no le enseñaría a María que ella es capaz de resolver sus problemas. Tampoco la invita a pensar sobre qué ocasionó su equivocación y lo que ella puede hacer al respecto. Elías y María están recibiendo saludables mensajes con respecto a los errores. Sus padres los están ayudando a descubrir que los errores y equivocaciones son oportunidades para aprender.

Cuando las Equivocaciones No Son Equivocaciones

A veces lo que parece como una equivocación es realmente exploración apropiada dentro del proceso de desarrollo. Ver a los niños tirar objetos de la silla alta o dibujar con el lápiz labial en vez de lápices de color puede molestar bastante, pero este comportamiento es totalmente consistente con el desarrollo de los niños pequeños.

Otras veces, el comportamiento de un niño refleja una carencia de habilidades. Los niños se ponen sus zapatos en los pies equivocados, o ponen el dedo equivocado en la parte del pulgar de su mitón. Ellos no se dan cuenta aún que los pies izquierdos y derechos son diferentes, o como funcionan los mitones. Nuevamente aquí, los padres pueden hacer preguntas y proveer indicios. Usted puede poner el mitón junto a las manos de su niño y ayudarlo a ver el mejor lugar para el pulgar.

El Niño Reacio

Algunos niños pueden ser reacios a contestar preguntas con respecto a sus equivocaciones. Ellos no creen que usted realmente los va a escuchar y respetar su punto de vista. Temen que usted usará la información contra ellos. Suponga que un niño que trata de abrir un recipiente plástico accidentalmente derrama el contenido en el piso. Si su madre o su padre lo regañan, ¿cree usted probable que el niño podrá aprender algo positivo desde esta experiencia? De hecho, ¿puede este niño negar que tuvo algo que ver con el desastre en el piso? Desafortunadamente, los niños pueden comenzar a mentir para protegerse a sí mismos cuando creen que serán castigados por equivocaciones y accidentes.

Suponga que el padre de Elías se enoja y le grita cuando derrama la leche; ¿Habría Elías aprendido a limpiar los derrames o como evitarlos? En vez de eso, él aprendería a tener miedo de tener accidentes y que sus padres lo supieran. Él puede decidir que es mejor no tratar de hacer cosas, ocultar sus equivocaciones, o culpar a otro.

Preguntas Para Aprender

Cuando los padres se enfocan en aprender de las situaciones y deducir respuestas, los niños llegan a ser más abiertos en admitir dificultades y buscar soluciones. He aquí algunas preguntas para que usted las use para ayudar a su niño a aprender de sus equivocaciones. No tiene que usarlas todas, pero piense sobre cuales ayudarían a fomentar a su pequeño a analizar sus experiencias y aprender de ellas:

¿Qué estabas tratando de hacer?
¿Qué sucedió?
¿Qué ocasionó lo que sucedió?
¿Como te sientes con respecto a lo que resultó?
¿Qué ideas tienes para resolver el problema?
¿Como puedes usar lo que has aprendido para prevenir el problema en el futuro?

La paternidad efectiva requiere pensamiento. Nosotros queremos ayudar a nuestros niños a comprender que las equivocaciones son oportunidades maravillosas de aprender habilidades importantes para la vida. Nuestros niños pueden no crecer para ser otro Thomas Edison, pero pueden aprender que las equivocaciones no son realmente fracasos, son otra oportunidad para triunfar.

Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., es la autora y coautora de once libros, incluyendo "Disciplina Positiva para Pre-escolares", y "Disciplina Positiva A-Z".

Cuando los Niños Mienten

No podemos hablar realmente sobre equivocaciones sin hablar sobre las mentiras. Mentir es algo sobre lo que los padres siempre preguntan, y está muy conectado a como se sienten los niños cuando comenten equivocaciones, y son sorprendidos.

Estas son algunas cosas para mantener en mente cuando trate de hacer sentido del comportamiento de su niño.

¿Es Realmente Una Mentira?

Un niño de cuatro años que jura que la leche chocolatada sobre el sofá de la sala no es suya, aunque él todavía sostiene el vaso, necesita un enfoque mesurado. Los preescolares que niegan hechos obvios probablemente tratan de proteger algunos sentimientos muy vulnerables. Los padres no deberían preocuparse de que el niño pequeño que miente ocasionalmente es un mentiroso. Todo los niños pequeños mienten. Para los niños, la mentira es una manera de evitar la vergüenza y el bochorno - no es la verdad lo que lastima, sino la culpa y la humillación que viene con ella.

Usted Ya Sabe la Respuesta.

Cuando la mayoría de los padres preguntan "¿Es esa la verdad?", ya tienen una buena idea de que no lo es. Si ha visto a su niño de seis años escamotear una galletita, o robarse una tarjeta de béisbol de su hermano, no argumente con su niño cuando él lo niegue. Asuma que tiene la razón y deje que su niño crea que usted tiene ojos en la parte de atrás de su cabeza. Si necesita disciplinarlo con consecuencias apropiadas, use declaraciones como: "Esas galletitas eran para el postre, me imagino que no vas a comer ninguna más tarde," o "Cuando tu hermano me pregunte donde está su nueva tarjeta de béisbol, le haré saber que la vi en tu pieza", comúnmente es suficiente para transmitir el mensaje.

No se Debe Pelear la Batalla Equivocada.

No se atasque en batallas tratando de sonsacar la verdad de los niños, tal como nosotros la vemos. Los niños se pondrán más tercos, cansados, y hasta se asustarán. Nosotros los castigamos, no por la equivocación, sino que por no decir la verdad, y la cuestión verdadera se pierde en la pelea. Nicki, de cuatro años, no se dio cuenta que el marcador mágico que estaba usando pasaría a través del papel y mancharía la alfombra. No le tomó mucho tiempo a su madre notarlo y enojarse con él. Nicki inmediatamente negó que él tuviera nada que ver con la mancha y fue enviado a su pieza, castigado por mentiroso y no para hacer la mancha - lo que realmente fue accidental. Los niños de cuatro años no son grandes comunicadores cuando están asustados, y Nicki era incapaz de encarar su equivocación, y los sentimientos de enojo de su madre. Su mentira era una manera de pretender que nada malo había sucedido.

¿Qué Hacer?

Tenemos que enfrentar la equivocación y ayudar a nuestros niños a darse cuenta que las equivocaciones suceden, que hay maneras de subsanarlas, y que mentir no es necesario. Los niños necesitan saber que nosotros estamos ahí para ayudarlos y para encontrar maneras de transformar las equivocaciones en experiencias para aprender, y que ocultar una equivocación mintiendo solo les impide aprender importantes lecciones.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW

Translated By
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
The Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute of
*North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center*
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
LECTI/NSC&FGC
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1997 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the USA.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year -- US$40
All Other Countries Add Postage

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER
NEWSLETTER
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A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 2 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — February 1998

CHILDREN AND SPORTS: *In the Safety Zone*

Children all across America are playing sports in record numbers. Kids with one thing in common: a desire to have fun. Most of the 20 million children who participate in organized sports will do so because playing sports promises to be enjoyable and exciting.

Let Your Child Choose

Whether or not you played sports, you'll want your child to take advantage of sports opportunities in your community; and you'll want to make sure your child will be able to look back on youth sports with fondness. Children won't have pleasant memories if they are pushed into playing a particular sport (or into playing sports at all). No matter why kids choose to play, it's important to remember they have the right to do just that - choose.

Expose your child to a number of sports, and watch for sparks of interest. Don't let society dictate what sport your son or daughter will play. Instead, let your child's genuine, unimpeded interest govern her or his path, whatever the interest.

Boys and girls with physical disabilities can also pursue an ever-widening range of sports. The only time you should consider overruling a child's desire to play a particular sport is for safety.

Why Kids Play - and Quit

As the parent of a child in sports you have great influence on the happiness and success of your child's experiences. So, let's look at the reasons kids play sports and what might provoke them to drop out.

- **Lack of playing time.** Children come to play, not to watch. Kids say that they would rather play for a losing team than sit on a winning team's bench.
- **Lack of success.** Repeated failures can generate anxiety, diminish self-worth, and cause kids to look for activities where they believe they'll be more successful.
- **Competitive stress.** A little anxiety or nervousness before a game or event is natural, even beneficial to performance. But if a child takes on undue stress -- usually from too much emphasis on winning -- then the fun is drained out of sport.
- **Too much criticism.** Children's self-worth is often wrapped up in how they believe adults -- especially parents -- see them. Yelling at a child to "just catch the ball" will not result in a better infielder. A child can translate criticism and insults into meaning that she or he is not just a bad player, but a bad person.

You and your child's coach are responsible for seeing that the sport experience enhances your child's self-worth, not diminishes it. If your child wants to quit because she'd rather do something else, that's fine, but you don't want her to quit because she's afraid of performing poorly or losing the game.

Personal Performance Goals

There is a prevailing attitude in society that "winning is everything," but that's not so. It's a significant part of sports, and striving to win makes sports fun and exciting, but athletes shouldn't find their sense of self-esteem only through winning. No one child in a team sport is in control of winning. Likewise, in individual sports, the child doesn't choose her or his opponent.

Instead, stress two things your child can experience that don't depend on winning: having fun and developing skills and abilities. By swinging the bat properly or shooting a basketball closer to the net your child can be successful regardless of the outcome of the contest.

With a focus on these kinds of performance goals children begin to see sports as an enjoyable learning experience. As you work with your child you may also find your own perception of sports changing. Winning becomes less important, and this also takes pressure off your youngster.

Handling Winning and Losing

Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet parts of sport. But they can turn sour if, through losing, your or your child's proper perspective is also lost.

You don't need to ignore the outcome, but help your child reflect on what he or she did well and on one or two things to concentrate on improving.

Don't minimize the sweetness of victory or gloss over the sorrow that comes with defeat, but don't let your child dwell on either one. Talk about the outcome of the game, respect your child's feelings about it and then help her move on to the other things in her life.

Children learn behavior from many different people but they learn the most from their parents. Your child not only soaks up what you say; he soaks up what you don't say.

Nonverbal messages - such as a look of disgust or disappointment - often speak louder than words. Your attitudes toward your child and other people are not easily hidden.

Keeping the perspective of "Athletes First, Winning Second" will help you display a healthy attitude toward sports and life -- and thus to encourage your child to do likewise.

The Best Perspective

As your child competes, help him keep things in proper perspective. For some children, success may mean simply mustering the courage to shoot the basketball (for others, it may mean being able to share the ball!).

Keep these three things in mind regarding competition:

- Emphasize fun, skill development, and striving to win rather than winning itself.
- Don't sacrifice sportsmanship for a "win-at-all costs" attitude.
- Make sports participation a part of your child's life -- not all of it.

Adapted from SportParent, American Sport Education Program, Human Kinetics, Inc. Champaign, IL., developers of curricula for adults who work with youth sports.

Ready? On Your Mark - Get set - GO!

Many children are pushed into playing sports long before they have the necessary physical, emotional, and intellectual capabilities to successfully participate. Such early childhood failures often breed dissatisfaction with one's own abilities, reinforce feelings of failure and inadequacy, and lead to dropping out.

The key is to know the right time to encourage a child to participate in sports.

There are three primary conditions of readiness:

- **Maturation** - the ability to perform the fundamental skills of the sport; e.g. holding the baseball bat and being able to swing the bat at the ball, running and kicking a soccer ball.
- **Learning** - the ability to understand the demands, tasks, and rules of the sport; e.g. throwing the ball to first base to get the runner out, kicking the soccer ball into the net to score a goal.
- **Motivation** - the desire to want to learn how to play the sport. Without the proper motivation, successful participation in the sport is highly unlikely even with appropriate maturational capabilities and learning skills.

If your child is capable of performing the skills of the sport, is able to understand the rules of the game, and has the desire to learn how to play the sport, enroll him or her in the sport. If not, wait a year. The initial experiences your child has with sports may motivate or discourage him or her to participate in sports in the future.

Reprinted with permission from Child Centered Coaching: A parent handbook by Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D.; National Institute for Child Centered Coaching; Park City, Utah.

Things for Parents to Remember

- Not all children want to participate in formal athletics, but they can still pursue activities which help them stay physically active. Skating, riding a bike, karate, even running can provide good exercise.
- Remember that children develop skills at different ages and avoid comparing your child to the boy or girl next door. Look at your child's own achievements and progress, praising and encouraging.
- Introduce your child to new activities. How can your daughter know she likes karate if she's never seen it? Or your son discover the pleasure of gymnastics?
- Familiarize yourself with the rules of the game. It makes it more enjoyable for you and for your child.
- Volunteer to help out at practices or on game day. Parent volunteers are often crucial to keep a team going, and it is good for your child to see you involved and caring.
- Be certain your child uses appropriate safety equipment; e.g. helmets, kneepads.
- Be careful of dehydration and make sure liquids are always available.
- Always have injuries checked by your child's doctor before resuming participation.
- Don't feel you have to "fire up" your youngster with a pep talk. Most kids are excited enough and those motivational discussions can make children too nervous to do their best or enjoy the sport.

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Dear Reader

One of my favorite memories from the years my son was in sports was the sight of a rather undisciplined group of little boys playing soccer. They had only the vaguest idea of the purpose of the game. They knew that they were supposed to kick the ball into the net; but which one? To those earnest little tots, a net was a net, and it didn't matter if it was their net or that of the opposing team. So, the coach would stand in the middle of the field waving his arms frantically toward the appropriate goal post, exhorting them to "go this way."

Of course, not all children's experiences in sports are this benign. I've heard coaches, trainers and parents berate, belittle even threaten young athletes. There is no possible excuse for that behavior. So, this month we are delighted to present Children and Sports. All children in athletics deserve an atmosphere which encourages them not to win, but to thrive.

Athletes and active children need healthy snacks, so read Amy Houts' Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS for great ideas.

This month, the Library Resources is a cornucopia of books to open our children's minds to the diversity of people and nationalities. Let's celebrate the many cultures which make up our history and our world.

Neala Schwartzberg

Library Resources

Multi-Cultural Reading For Children

📖 ***What's the Matter, Habibi?***; by Betsy Lewin; illustrated by Betsy Lewin; Clarion Books, New York; 1997; Hardcover, $15.00. This sweet book, with charming illustrations, is the story of Ahmed and his "darling" camel. In the Middle East, camels are revered and valuable animals. This tender book reflects the affection between Ahmed and Habibi.

📖 ***Jewels*** by Belinda Rochelle; illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu; Lodestar Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. An evocative story about an African-American girl's visit to her great-grandparents. They tell her the stories of generations of her family.

📖 ***Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad*** by Pamela Duncan Edwards; illustrated by Henry Cole; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. The woods and its creatures are witness to the courage of a boy as he escapes from the slavery.

📖 ***Moonstick: The Seasons of the Sioux*** by Eve Bunting; paintings by John Sandford; Joanna Cotler Books, an imprint of HarperCollins; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. The story of a young Native-American boy describes the changes in his life and in nature that come with each new moon. Sensitively written with luminous paintings.

📖 ***Radio Man: A story in English and Spanish*** by Arthur Dorros, Spanish translation by Sandra Marulanda Dorros; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1993; Softcover, $5.95. As he travels with his family of migrant farm workers, Diego's radio keeps him connected.

📖 ***Ali Child of the Desert*** by Jonathan London; illustrated by Ted Lewin; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, New York, 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. A sudden sand storm separates Ali from his father on their journey through the Sahara Desert. But with the help of a Berber herdsman father and son are reunited.

📖 ***Big Boy*** by Tololwa M. Mollel; illustrated by E. B. Lewis; Clarion Books; New York, 1995; Softcover, $5.95. Oli is a little boy in Tanzania, but he dreams of being big, and in his dream he grows to be a giant.

📖 ***Arctic Son*** by Jean Craighead George; paintings by Wendell Minor; Hyperion Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. In the Arctic, Eskimo people welcome all children, giving Eskimo names even to those who are not Eskimo. The book, about Luke/Kupaaq, the author's grandson, is a taste of the lives of the Eskimo people.

📖 ***The Always Prayer Shawl*** by Sheldon Oberman; illustrated by Ted Lewin; Puffin Books; New York, 1994; Softcover, $5.99. This is a lovely book about a prayer shawl passed down from father to grandson across generations. The prayer shawl has changed many times but it remains a symbol of the continuing ties of love and family.

📖 ***Sweet Dried Apples: A Vietnamese Wartime Childhood*** by Rosemary Breckler; illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1996; Hardcover, $15.95. For one Vietnamese girl the peaceful days spent learning about medicinal herbs from her grandfather give way to a frightening war. A touching book, about the impact of war.

📖 ***The Last Dragon*** by Susan Miho Nunes; illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet; Clarion Books; New York, 1995; Softcover, $5.95. Peter Chang is not happy to be spending the summer with his Great Aunt. But when he sees an old 10-person dragon in need of fixing up, he finds a summer project and learns about the strength of community and the traditions of his culture.

📖 ***Celebrate in Central America***; written by Joe Vesti and Diane Hall; photographed by Joe Vesti; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, Morrow; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. This book is a wonderful way to meet the people of Central America through their traditions and celebrations.

📼 ***Fiesta***; Children's Television Workshop and SONY Wonder; New York, 1997; Video: 30 minutes, $12.98. Sing, dance, and celebrate. Children will definitely enjoy this party. Learn Elmo's new dance, the Conga-Wiggle.

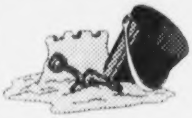
Sports Resources:

📖 ***SportParent*** by American Sport Education Program; Human Kinetics; Champaign, Il. (800-747-4457); Softcover, $8.95. This book, which formed the basis of the featured article this month, offers a wealth of advice for parents. Their SportParent Survival Guide, a byproduct of the book, is available ($1).

📖 ***Child Centered Coaching***; by Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D.; Family Development Resources, Inc.; Park City, Utah (800-688-5822); Pamphlet, Parent Manual, $.95; Coach's Manual $1.95.Part of their Child Centered Coaching Program helping coaches and parents make sports a safe, fun, and positive experience for all children.

Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

Tanner is climbing the jungle gym. Mikeyla is swinging. Andrea is digging in the sand. On a field across from the park, Sarah is playing soccer on a team with other 5- and 6-year-olds.



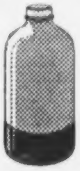
Preschoolers need to be active. Developing their gross motor skills is one of the important tasks for young children. Whether at the park or in a game, the activity and fresh air will help stimulate young appetites. You will want to plan for snacking.

What should you take? What is best to eat and drink while your preschooler is being active? What if you are watching a game that runs right through lunch (as they often do)?

"When children eat complex carbohydrates like whole grain bread and fruits, they can play longer. They don't run out of steam," says Laura Thomson, R.N., and mother of two young boys. If a child eats cookies and soda pop, it's going to be digested quickly, and he will run out of energy. "A child needs to eat what we all need to eat," explains Mrs. Thomson, "healthy snacks made of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables."

Don't feed your child a heavy meal before physical activity, but if a game is going to run through normal meal time, do give her a snack beforehand, so she won't get too hungry. Plan to eat after the game. Warming a pot of chicken noodle soup is a wonderful welcome home (see recipe below). If your youngster is watching an older sibling, pack a lunch or 1/2 sandwich as a snack.

Do bring crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes, sliced cheese and fresh fruits and vegetables. Slice the fruits, dipping apples and bananas in water mixed with a little lemon juice to prevent discoloring. Avoid fatty snacks such as potato chips and pre-wrapped cakes. Instead, include ginger snaps, animal crackers, or granola bars. You can also make your own cereal mix (see recipe below) to bring to the park or game. Don't forget to bring something to drink. But rather than a sugary drink such as soda pop, offer your youngster water. Give choices to your preschooler but make them healthy choices.



And one final note, don't forget the wonderful varieties of dried fruits, nuts, and seeds available. An assortment of dried figs, dates, and apricots mixed with walnuts and sunflower seeds, make an especially nice treat for young athletes.

Cereal Mix

Yield: about 20 servings

A variety of shapes make this cereal mix interesting to look at, fun to eat, and more delicious.

2 cups circle-shaped cereal
2 cups square-shaped cereal
2 cups sphere-shaped cereal
2 cups small pretzels
2 cups animal crackers

Preschoolers can help measure and mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. Store in plastic bag or container. Serve in small paper cups. Let children eat as finger food.

Amy's Easy Chicken Noodle Soup

Serves 8

4 quarts water
4 boneless chicken breasts
1 tablespoon chicken bouillon
1 carrot, diced fine
1 stalk celery, diced fine
6 oz. fine egg noodles

Bring water to boil in a 8 quart pot. Add chicken. Turn down heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove chicken from the pot and set aside. Preschoolers can help add vegetables. Simmer another 15 minutes. Meanwhile, dice the chicken. Add noodles and the diced chicken. Simmer 5 minutes more.

Safety on the Playground

Parents need to be able to evaluate the areas in which their children play. Here are some tips to help parents become aware of the risk factors in a playground.

- Are there fences and guard rails around the play areas to stop children and balls from going into the street or uncontrolled cars and trucks from entering the play area?
- Is there drug or gang activity in the area?
- Is there a working phone nearby for emergencies?
- Is there an area for parents or caregivers to sit in which they have a clear view of the play areas?
- Is the play area free from injury-causing debris?
- Is the play equipment in good condition?

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute
Managing Editor
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Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043

Copyright 1998, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center - The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute; Printed in the USA.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 2 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* February 1998

LOS NIÑOS Y LOS DEPORTES: En la zona de seguridad

A lo largo y ancho de los Estados Unidos los niños están haciendo deportes en números récord. Todos los niños tienen una cosa en común: el deseo de divertirse. La mayoría de los 20 millones de niños que participan en deportes organizados, lo hacen porque los deportes prometen ser una actividad agradable y excitante.

Deje Que Su Niño Escoja

Ya sea que usted hizo o no deportes, usted querrá que su niño o niña aprovechen las oportunidades deportivas que hay en su comunidad; y querrá asegurarse de que su niño podrá en el futuro mirar hacia atrás, y recordar los deportes de su niñez con afecto. Los niños no tendrán memorias agradables si son empujados a hacer un deporte en particular (o en hacer deportes del todo). No importa por qué los niños escogen hacer (o no) un deporte, es importante recordar que ellos tienen derecho a hacer precisamente eso - escoger. Exponga a su niño a un número de deportes, y observe si hay chispas de interés. No deje que la sociedad dicte que deporte debe hacer su hijo o hija. En vez, deje que el genuino interés de su niño, o niña, rija su trayectoria, cualquiera que esta sea, sin impedimentos. Los niños y niñas con incapacidades físicas también pueden perseguir una gama de deportes que está siempre ampliándose. El único momento en que usted debería considerar rechazar el deseo de un niño de hacer un deporte en particular, es cuando tenga que ver con su propia seguridad.

Por Qué los Niños Juegan - y Dejan de Hacerlo

Como padre o madre de un niño que practica algún deporte, usted tiene una gran influencia en la felicidad y el éxito de las experiencias de su niño. Veamos las razones por la que los niños hacen deportes y qué puede hacerlos renunciar a ello.

- La falta de participación. Los niños vienen a participar, no a mirar. Los niños dicen que ellos prefieren jugar por un equipo perdedor que sentarse en la banca del equipo ganador.

- La falta de éxito. Los fracasos repetidos pueden generar ansiedad, disminuir la auto valorización, y hacer que los niños busquen actividades en las que creen que serán más exitosos.

- La tensión competitiva. Un poco de inquietud o nerviosismo antes de un juego o evento deportivo es natural, y hasta beneficioso para el buen desempeño. Pero si un niño sufre de tensión desmedida – comúnmente debido a demasiado énfasis en ganar – entonces la diversión desaparece del deporte.

- Demasiada crítica. La auto valoración de los niños frecuentemente está envuelta en como ellos creen que los adultos -- especialmente los padres -- los ven. Gritarle a un niño, "simplemente agarra la pelota" no resultará en un mejor jugador de campo de béisbol. Un niño puede llegar a creer que las críticas e insultos significan que ella o él no es solo un mal jugador, sino que además, es una mala persona. Usted y el entrenador de su niño son responsables de ver que la experiencia deportiva mejore la auto valorización de su niño, no que la disminuya. Si su niño quiere abandonar la actividad porque prefiere hacer otra cosa, está bien, pero Ud. no querrá que abandone la actividad porque tiene miedo de desempeñarse mal o de perder el partido.

Metas de Desempeño Personal

Hay una actitud predominante en la sociedad que "ganar es todo", pero eso no es así. Ganar es una parte importante de los deportes, y tratar de ganar hace que los deportes sean divertidos y excitantes, pero los atletas no deberían encontrar su sentido de auto estima solo en ganar. En un deporte de equipo ningún niño en particular tiene el control de ganar. Asimismo, en los deportes individuales, el niño no escoge a su adversario. En vez, enfatice dos cosas que su niño puede experimentar que no dependen de ganar: la diversión y el desarrollar sus habilidades y capacidades.

Al batear adecuadamente o tirar una pelota de básquetbol más cerca de la red, su niño puede tener éxito sin considerar el resultado del partido. Con un enfoque en estos tipos de metas de desempeño, los niños comienzan a ver los deportes como una experiencia de aprendizaje agradable. A medida que trabaje con su niño, usted también puede encontrar que su propia percepción de los deportes cambia. Ganar llega a ser menos importante, y esto también le quita presión a su niño.

Manejando el Ganar y el Perder

Ir tras la victoria y lograr metas son partes dulces de los deportes. Pero se pueden volver amargas si, por perder, también su niño o niña pierde la perspectiva apropiada. No necesita ignorar el resultado, pero ayude a su niños a reflexionar sobre lo que él o ella hizo bien y sobre una o dos cosas en las que debe concentrarse en mejorar. No minimice la dulzura de la victoria o pase por alto el dolor que viene con la derrota, pero no deje que su niño se concentre demasiado en ninguno de estos. Hable con él o ella sobre el resultado del juego, respete sus sentimientos al respecto y solo entonces ayúdelo a movilizarse a otras cosas en su vida.

Los niños aprenden su comportamiento de mucha gente diferente, pero ellos aprenden más de sus padres. Su niño no solamente se empapa de lo que usted dice; también se empapa de lo que usted no dice.

Los mensajes no verbales - tal como una mirada de desagrado o desilusión - frecuentemente hablan más fuerte que las palabras. Sus actitudes hacia su niño y otra gente no pueden ser ocultadas fácilmente. Manteniendo la perspectiva

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de "atletas primero, ganar segundo" le ayudará a mostrar una actitud saludable hacia los deportes y la vida – y así fomentar a su niño a que haga lo mismo.

La Mejor Perspectiva

A medida que su niño compita, ayúdelo a mantener las cosas en la perspectiva apropiada. Para algunos niños, el éxito puede significar simplemente reunir el coraje para tirar la pelota de básquetbol (para otros, puede significar ser capaz de ¡compartir la pelota!). Mantenga estas tres cosas en mente con respecto a la competencia:

- Enfatice la diversión, el desarrollo de habilidades, y tratar de ganar, más bien que ganar en sí mismo.

- No sacrifique la ética deportiva en aras de una actitud basada en "ganar a toda costa".

- Haga el participar en deportes una parte de la vida de su niño -- no un todo.

Adaptado de "SportParent, American Sport Education Program, Human Kinetics, Inc." (Padres Deportivos, Programa Americano de Educación Deportiva), Champaign, IL., desarrolladores de currículum para adultos que trabajan en deportes para jóvenes.

¿Listos? ¡En sus marcas - prepárense - partieron!

Muchos niños son empujados a hacer deportes mucho antes de tener las necesarias capacidades intelectuales, emocionales, y físicas para participar en ellos exitosamente. Tales fracasos tempranos de la niñez frecuentemente crían descontento con las propias capacidades, refuerzan sentimientos de fracaso e insuficiencia, y llevan finalmente a renunciar a las actividades deportivas. La clave está en reconocer el momento correcto para fomentar la participación en los deportes.

Hay tres condiciones primarias para estar listo:

- **Maduración** - la capacidad para desempeñar las habilidades fundamentales del deporte; p. ej. sostener el bate de béisbol y ser capaz de golpear la pelota con el bate; correr y patear una pelota de fútbol.

- **Aprender** - la capacidad de comprender las demandas, tareas, y reglas del deporte; p.ej. tirar la pelota a la primera base para poner fuera al corredor; patear la pelota de fútbol a la red para marcar un gol.

- **Motivación** - el deseo de querer aprender como hacer un deporte. Sin la motivación apropiada, la participación exitosa en el deporte es muy poco probable, aunque se tengan las capacidades de maduración y habilidades para aprender adecuadas. Si su niño es capaz de manejar las habilidades del deporte, es capaz de comprender las reglas del juego, y tiene el deseo de aprender como jugar el deporte, matricúlelo en el deporte. Si no, espere un año. Las experiencias iniciales que su niño tenga con los deportes pueden motivarlo o desalentarlo a participar en deportes en el futuro.

Reimpreso con permiso de "Child Centered Coaching: A parent handbook" (Entrenamiento centrado en el niño: un manual para los padres) por Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D.; National Institute for Child Centered Coaching (Instituto Nacional de Entrenamiento Centrado en el Niño); Park City, Utah.

Cosas Que Deben Recordar Los Padres

- No todos los niños quieren participar en actividades atléticas formalmente, pero igual pueden participar en actividades que los ayudarán a permanecer físicamente activos. Patinar, andar en bicicleta, hacer kárate, hasta el correr pueden proveer de buen ejercicio.

- Recuerde que los niños desarrollan habilidades a diferentes edades y evite comparar a su niño con el niño o niña de la vecina. Observe el progreso y los logros de su propio niño, alabándolo y alentándolo.

- Introduzca a su niño a nuevas actividades. ¿Como podría saber su hija que le gusta el kárate si nunca lo ha visto? ¿O su hijo descubrir el placer de la gimnasia?

- Familiarícese usted mismo con las reglas del juego. Será más agradable para usted y para su niño.

- Ofrézcase para ayudar en las prácticas o en los días de juego. Los padres voluntarios son frecuentemente cruciales para mantener a un equipo funcionando, y es bueno para su niño verlo involucrado e interesado.

- Asegúrese que su niño use equipo de seguridad apropiado; p.ej. casco o rodilleras.

- Tenga cuidado con la deshidratación y asegúrese que halla líquidos siempre disponibles.

- Siempre haga que el doctor de su niño revise cualquier lesión antes de reanudar su participación en el deporte.

- No se sienta como que tiene que "encender" a su niño con una arenga. La mayoría de los niños están suficientemente excitados, y esas charlas motivadoras pueden ponerlos demasiado nerviosos como para poder hacer lo mejor que puedan o disfrutar del deporte.

Translated By:
Tikal Translations
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER
Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Lindner Early Childhood
Training Institute
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year -- US$40
Other Countries Add Postage
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 3 ★ *Special 6-Page Edition* ★ March 1998

THE IMPORTANT FIRST YEARS OF LIFE

My baby was only three days old, but he stared at me as if he knew who I was. I diapered him and I thought he was trying to look at me. I told everyone about my son's remarkable behavior but they smiled and told me that a mother's love was blind. Seven years later, when my third child was born, I saw him following voices with his eyes in the delivery room. Now I had research on my side. I wasn't imagining my baby's behavior. Adults were finally paying attention to the responsiveness of babies, and we were astonished by what we were finding out.

Parents, as well as professionals in early childhood, have been flooded with incredible new information on how children grow, much of it the result of the burgeoning amount of research on brain development. National magazines, international conferences, and prime time television specials are bringing this wealth of fascinating material to our homes. Parents are being told that the first three years of a child's life are a very special time and that these years go by very quickly. But we are also learning that experiences during these years leave indelible marks on how our children grow.

So what is it that we need to know in order to give our children the best possible start in life?

➢ What is going on in their little minds?

Four month old Matthew is asleep in his crib. His father sees his gently folded fists, hears his soft breathing and his face quiet in repose. Matthew looks as if he doesn't have a care in the world, but his body and his brain are working very hard. His parents know his body has grown--Matthew has almost doubled his weight since birth. But what they can't really see is how much his brain has grown. Scientists used to think that a baby's brain was fully formed at birth but we now know that a baby's brain changes dramatically during the first three years of life.

The 100 billion cells that carry information in the brain, the neurons, are there at birth, but the bridges that connect these neurons, the synapses, are multiplying at an astonishing rate. As a matter of fact, a three year-old's brain is twice as active as that of an adult.

These neural connections form the building blocks of thought. Babies come to recognize faces and sounds, reach for a ball, learn the meaning of words and actions, giggle when they see dad, all because of these crucial connections.

➢ What causes these connections?

Stimulation and experience play a big part in creating all these important connections. New technology can now help us see babies responses to stimulation in utero, before they are born. Babies respond to maternal stress, loud noises, and great music. They move around, suck their thumbs, or become very still in response to what is going on around them. After they are born, when we stroke their skin, rub lotion after a bath, or sing songs and silly rhymes, we are turning on switches that promote brain growth. When we point out colors of cars to toddlers, or label the fruits in the store, we are helping connect brain cells and stimulating our children's ability to piece information together.

➢ Experience is not enough

Experience alone, however, is not enough to promote the kind of healthy

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growth that children need. Our babies recognize our voices, our words, and our meaning long before they are able to form their own words to talk with us. But our speech is not enough to teach children good language skills. It is also our response to the cooing of a five-month-old, or the sometimes funny babbling of a two-year-old, or a three-year- old who tries desperately to tell a story that doesn't seem to end, that teaches our children how to use language. Children use their language not just to talk, but to be heard. It is a belief that their words will be understood and appreciated and that inspires our children to communicate with us.

➢ Emotions matter

The new research is telling us, then, that the greatest stimulator of growth for children appears to be found not just in the library or the toy store. The relationships children have with the people who love them create the environment for healthy development and bright futures. We are incredibly social animals. Whether in the play pen at home, or the floor mats at the day care center, our babies are, from birth, searching for social and emotional connections. The experiences children have making these emotional connections, learned in the context of their relationship with the adults around them, have a profound influence on future development. It is within the safe attachment and connection to their parents and caregivers, that children grow and blossom.

➢ Brains are fragile, too

We also know that environmental assaults -- cigarette smoking, viruses, drugs and alcohol, and inadequate nutrition -- leave their mark on this developing brain. These stressors can affect the brains ability to "wire" itself correctly. While a young child's brain seems magical, it cannot overcome all the negative environmental dangers it faces.

Perhaps the most dramatic trauma to the brain is "shaken baby syndrome" where a baby is shaken severely, causing the fragile brain to be bruised as it repeatedly hits the hard skull encasing it. The bleeding and swelling from this injury can kill a child or leave permanent brain damage. Experiences such as witnessing violence in the family, or constant neglectful treatment can cause children to "shut down." Not only do they suffer emotionally, but their physical and cognitive development are also in jeopardy.

➢ Creating the best environments

Over the years experts have had different theories about how children coped with the traumatic events in their lives and their ability to bounce back and be resilient. Parents have assumed, or hoped, that their children were too young to understand the meaning of what they were witnessing or that their children had a protective barrier, formed of their innocence. If children do have a shield, it is found in their parents, guardians or caregivers. It is within the safety of strong, loving relationships that children find protection. Without it, a child's development may be seriously compromised.

The Effect of Neglect

At Baylor College of Medicine, Bruce Perry and co-workers have studied the impact of neglect and trauma on the neurobiology of over 1,000 abused and neglected children. In one study, twenty children who had been raised in globally under-stimulating environments - children who were rarely touched or spoken to and who had little opportunity to explore and experiment with toys - were examined with sophisticated new brain-imaging techniques and other measures of brain growth. The children were found to have brains that were 20 to 30 percent smaller than most children their age and, in over half the cases, parts of the children's brains appeared to have literally wasted away.

Ounce of Prevention Fund; Chicago, Ill.; 1996

Jennifer was born with the "right stuff." A beautiful baby girl, weighing eight pounds at birth, Jennifer came home full of promise. Jennifer's mother, Toni, a single mom, was living with her own parents in a fixed-up basement apartment. Toni wanted to stay home with Jennifer, thinking it would be best for her baby. She was also feeling too tired and overwhelmed to manage work and mothering. Toni's parents, who worked full time, helped their daughter on weekends. They adored Jennifer and often bought her toys. But by the time she was eight months old, they began to worry about her. Jennifer wasn't gaining enough weight and seemed to be very quiet. She wasn't laughing, or developing the way they thought a robust, healthy infant should. As a matter of fact, the apartment was always quiet, with Jennifer and her mother napping or watching television.

Jennifer's grandparents were right to worry. Toni was not just tired. Toni had "shut down." Scared of her responsibilities, she had begun to sink into depression. She was barely able to provide her daughter with basic care and it was having an effect on Jennifer's development. Toni was unable to respond to her daughter's curious sounds, or her first attempts at crawling. Jennifer, not getting the joyous rewards of her success, or comfort for her failure, shut down, too. Her senses were not stimulated, and she was having few of the experiences she needed for growth and development. Jennifer began to live in the same sad, quiet world as her mother.

Jennifer's mother was in trouble and needed professional help. Her fatigue was just one of many signs of depression. Jennifer, in the absence of the stimulation and affection she needed, stopped developing normally. Jennifer's emotional environment affected her cognitive development and her ability to make those important neural connections. But a happier ending is possible. By getting help and support early enough, both Jennifer and her mother can "catch up," making up for lost time and lost opportunities.

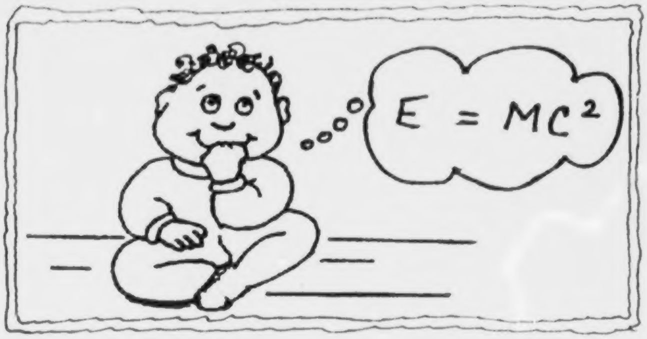
➢ What Have We Learned?

So the real knowledge we have gained from the scientific discoveries of the past twenty years is that babies are born with incredible capacity, but also with strong needs. The needs are not just for basic survival through the provision of food, warmth, and safety, but for the sometimes more demanding and difficult resources of emotional warmth, nurturance and stability. Scientists have debated for decades whether our children are born the way they are, or if the environment shapes who they become. We are more convinced than ever that it is a combination of both that makes our children who they are. Many babies, born with resilience and strength, may not be able to survive all the negative experiences life offers; while babies who are born more fragile may thrive, protected by strong, healthy supports. The protection offered by a loving environment is the best safety net we can build for our children.

A while ago, my son and I were at his hockey game, where it seemed he was spending a great deal of time keeping the bench warm. I told him that if I were the coach, I would play him, since I thought he was a great defensive player. He made a face and said, "You're my mother. You're supposed to say that." I shrugged my shoulders and said, "I know."

We dance best, not when we glide alone across the floor, but when we move as one with a partner. In the dance of life, the partnership between parents and their children, and the magic they create, is the best and most promising start.

Sandra Wolkoff, CSW is a nationally known consultant and trainer and the Managing Editor of the P&pN. She frequently appears on television and radio and has hosted the cable television program "Ages & Stages." She is the Director of Training & Consultation for North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.



ABC's For You and For Your Baby

- **Before baby is born**

Get good prenatal care. Nothing beats a good beginning. A mother's healthy diet and good follow-up during pregnancy can keep problems from starting.

Make plans about what to do after the baby is born as soon as possible. Arrange for quality child care, discuss flex-time work schedule with your boss, learn about your legal right to parental leave.

- **After baby arrives**

Hold and touch your baby. It may take a bit of practice but you will soon find the right position and become comfortable. You'll learn whether your baby likes belly rubs or back rubs. You'll discover that bath time, diaper changing, feeding are all opportunities to hold and love your baby.

Remember that your baby sees, hears, and takes in more information than you realize. The songs you sing during car rides, the mobile in the crib, your gentle touch as you diaper your baby, all become information that finds its way into her developing brain. As your baby grows, continue to introduce her to new ideas and experiences as part of her daily life. Count the cars on the road, the carrots on the plate. Look for letters on the cans in the supermarket. See the objects around the house which are all red, or blue. All this is part of your own special early childhood curriculum.

Everyone needs friends. Play groups, "Mommy and Me" programs, child care settings are all chances for children to learn social skills. The key is great supervision and appropriate structure. It's worth the time and effort to find a good program. Remember that it takes some kids longer to learn to play with other children, so be patient.

Play is truly the work of children. Children need the time and a safe space to play. They don't need expensive computer games by the age of three, but they do need the opportunity to play with blocks and dolls, with balls and trucks, regardless of their gender. They need time to practice skills, like building a tower of blocks and knocking it down to see how it falls. They need to learn about banging pots and pans, and to learn about cause and effect.

More is not always better. There really is a line between good early stimulation and experiences, and being overwhelmed by excessive activities. It is crucial to learn about your own child, his rhythms and responses, so you know how much is enough or too much.

- **Tips For You:**

Get involved. Whether through religious organizations, library, or community groups, become involved in programs to reduce your isolation. New parents often find great comfort in learning that everyone feels having a baby is the most dramatic event in their lives, and the most overwhelming.

Don't be reluctant to ask for help. There's nothing quite as difficult as looking at your child and worrying that she doesn't seem to be developing like other children. Or that you don't seem to feel the way other parents, or even your partner, feel about their children. There is no harm in asking for advice or information from early childhood experts in your community, or in using your local resources to help you get information.

- **One final word:**

You are going to be a parent for a long time. While the first three years offer unique opportunities for a child and his family; raising, teaching and loving children goes on for a long time. Our children will give us many chances to become better parents -- let's take advantage of them.

Sandra Wolkoff, CSW

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Did You Know?

Facts About the Brain

- Our brain is composed of two almost identical halves. With few exceptions, the right side of the brain controls the left half of our body; the left side of the brain controls the right half of our body. Do we know why we have this cross-over effect? Not really. But it means when someone has an injury or stroke on the right side of the brain, it affects the left half of the body, and vice-versa.

- Each hemisphere (or side) of the brain has its own specialized ability. Most people have their speech and language ability in their left hemisphere. This half of the brain also processes information sequentially, in a 'one step at a time' manner. The right hemisphere is better at spatial tasks and tends to process information globally, in an 'all at once' manner. The two hemispheres of the brain communicate with each other through a thick bundle of fibers called the corpus callosum. This design gives us the benefit of both kinds of problem solving.

- Many people have preferences in how they solve problems which is related to these differences. When given a design and asked to reproduce it, people with a more dominant left side of the brain tend to break the pattern down into sections and analyze the way the pieces fit together; people with a more dominant right side see it as an integrated whole.

- Our brain is also very wrinkled, and these wrinkles increase the surface area, packing more brain power into a limited space. As we go up from rat to cat to ape and to human, brains become more and more wrinkled, and thinking and behavior become more and more complex.

- Children who experience severe trauma when very young show changes in brain chemistry. The parts of their brain which process emotional content (e.g. frightening situations or angry people) can become very sensitive. These children may react more strongly, even years later, to events which other children may more readily shrug off.

- Testing your child for sensory problems (e.g. vision and hearing) is very important. Your child's brain has separate areas for handling different types of information but the cells in her brain won't develop properly unless they are exposed to that kind of information. For example, the visual part of baby's brain must have visual experiences in order to develop the ability to see.

- Our brain processes sensory information in specialized areas. Movement of parts of our body is controlled in other locations. The rest of the brain is composed of areas which connect memory, thought, language, and movement so baby can see our face, recognize us, and smile with pleasure. Our toddler can taste the banana, like the flavor, and say "more 'nana."

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.

Dear Reader

I had to laugh the other day when I read that tiny babies readily learn to stick out their tongues. It was as if the writer had been in my son's nursery many years ago when I looked down at my infant and thought – "I think I'll teach him to stick out his tongue." He was a quick study and soon became quite proficient. Like any child who has learned a new skill, he eagerly demonstrated it to an audience; his grandparents, the doctor, his father. And, as he did his new trick I would announce proudly "isn't he wonderful?"

Babies really are incredible. They lie there, seemingly doing nothing but in fact, they are doing everything. For years experts believed that many of these changes involved nothing more than maturation. These skills and abilities would unfold because that was the way the brain was programmed.

But the more we learn about children, the more we appreciate one enduring truth. Children need involved, loving parents. In this month's expanded issue Sandra Wolkoff, who is both a parent and child development expert, puts the research into perspective. Parents provide the context which protects and nurtures children and which encourages babies to grow and develop.

Although in many parts of the country it can still get quite cold, Spring officially begins this month. I'm already thinking about gardens, flowers and sunshine. We'll have more to say about that in our next issue.

Happy Spring!

Neala Schwartzberg

The Doctors Corner

Dentistry for Kids

New technology and a better understanding of the needs of children can make a visit to the dentist a pleasant outing. Today's child is fortunate compared to past generations because dentistry has come a long way.

The pediatric or family dentist should be contacted very early in a child's life, even before the age of two. This allows the dentist to assess any immediate needs and create the foundation for a good relationship. The approach to any medical situation should be one of prevention, and pediatric dental care is no exception.

✦ Tooth Decay

Even in this time of media awareness, tooth decay (or dental caries) continues to be one of the most common diseases affecting American children. This infection actually eats away the layers of the tooth and can eventually cause loss of teeth.

"Nursing bottle syndrome" is still an alarming problem. Children who go to bed with a drink which contains any sugar, even milk or juice, can develop dental caries.

In families with a predisposition to tooth decay, and those with poor diet, the bacteria responsible for decay can cause rapid destruction of teeth.

Other factors also promote dental caries. Enzymes in saliva help protect teeth against decay. When saliva is not flowing normally the mouth becomes dry, reducing the level of enzymes which are normally present to prevent cavities.

Proper brushing and flossing are also important. When children don't brush or floss regularly bacteria are free to run rampant over teeth and cause decay.

✦ Prevention

Since we have a good grasp of the causes of decay, we are in an excellent position to prevent it.

The first visit to the dentist consists of a brief examination, followed by instruction in oral care, dietary counseling, and a fluoride evaluation. The dentist will also determine if your child is at risk for developing dental caries. Any potential condition or abnormality will also be diagnosed and a treatment plan developed. Finally, the dentist will also acclimate your child, helping him become familiar and comfortable with the dental office.

As your child grows, the use of fluoride, antibacterial mouth rinses, and the administration of dental sealants are very effective in preventing or eliminating cavities.

Children usually get their first cavity on the biting surface of both the baby and permanent molars (which appear around the age of six). Dental sealants will smooth out these deep groves so that food and plaque slide right off.

✦ Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs often require early dental treatment. Very often, parents assume that it is impossible for their children to receive care outside of the hospital or clinic. Years ago, the special child would have to rely on the hospital but today, family and pediatric dentists are prepared to assess and treat the needs of all children, including those with medical conditions and disabilities. The dentist is able to supply medications to meet their pre-existing conditions, or provide sedation or relaxation aids. Specially trained staff make a parent and child feel accepted and secure.

***Marshall A. Polan, DDS** is a family dentist with offices in Albertson and Huntington, Long Island, New York.*

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Websites for Parents

Kids Source
http://www.kidsource.com

Created by Karen Dillon to provide information by recognized experts and agencies as well as a chance for parents to chat with other parents. Provides age-specific sections on newborns, toddlers, preschoolers as well as information on education, health and more. Their newest service is a package of articles on the specific themes, starting with Kindergarten. One of the best parenting sites on the Internet.

I Am Your Child
http://iamyourchild.org

This site contains a wealth of information focusing on the first three years of life, from brain research to answers to specific child-rearing questions (e.g. How do I handle crying?). The information is provided by experts for parents. Also contains a section on resources and references as well as other Internet sites.

Kid's Health
http://kidshealth.org

Stresses health related information but also provides information on a range of topics from biting to doctor visits. The information is provided by pediatric experts at Alfred I. duPont Hospitals for Children, the Nemours Children's Clinics and other children's health facilities nationwide. Nutrition, safety, support group information, raising healthy kids and more.

Ready, Set, Imagine

Books to Inspire the Mind & Imagination

The Traveler: A magical journey by Daniel Page Schallau; told by James Keller; Greenwich Workshop Press; Shelton, CT, 1997; Hardcover $15.95. Stunningly intricate pictures and gentle prose combine to make this a wonderful tale of a boy's discovery of the joys of imagination.

Edward and the Pirates by David McPhail; Little, Brown and Company; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $15.95. "Once Edward learned to read, there was no stopping him," begins this book about a boy's love of reading. But when pirates force him to walk the plank, his mother charges in on a white horse to save him. Properly chastised, the pirates settle in while Edward reads them a story.

Star Shapes by Peter Malone; Chronicle Books; San Francisco, CA, 1997; Hardcover, $15.95. The glittering constellations of the night sky come to life. The Stargazing section explains their origins and describes some of those more commonly seen. A magical book for everyone.

The Giant by Nicholas Heller; pictures by Jos. A Smith; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $15.00. Giants, huge pigeons and frogs are leaping out of paintings. But Evan and Iggy Weller, the painter, solve the problem and put everything back aright.

Meanwhile by Jules Feiffer; HarperCollins; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. Reluctant to leave his book and listen to his mother, Raymond discovers the convenience of the literary device "meanwhile" to change the scene and action. This witty book follows Raymond's adventures as he gets himself into more and more mischief.

Singing Down the Rain by Joy Cowley; illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist; HarperCollins; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. The town is facing a terrible drought, until a mysterious woman appears "with bangles on her arms, painted parrots in her ears, and a smile so big it used most of her face." When the townspeople finally join her singing, they sing down the rain with a waterfall of faith in this beautifully illustrated story.

Unicorn Dreams by Dyan Sheldon; illustrated by Neil Reed; Dial Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.99. Only Dan can see the unicorn with bells in its mane, but his belief changes the grey town into a magical land, and brings the other children along. A beautiful book with luminous pictures.

The Eleventh Hour: A Curious Mystery by Graeme Base; Puffin Books; New York, 1997 Large softcover, $6.99. Horace the Elephant has planned a very special party to celebrate his 11th birthday, but his lavish feast has disappeared. Filled with hidden clues and Base's unique artwork. Although for children 6 and up, this book will make a wonderful family activity with older preschoolers.

Ms. MacDonald Has a Class by Jan Ormerod; Clarion Books; New York; 1997; Hardcover $15.95. This book is a joyful celebration of individuality, and how we can look at life in different ways. It is the story of a class that takes a trip to a farm. The children begin to think about being something other than what they are.

My Life With the Wave based on a story by Octavio Paz; illustrated by Mark Buehner; Lothrop, Lee & Shephard; New York; 1997; Hardcover $15.95. Most kids bring home stray dogs or cats. the boy in this story brings home a wave! Through witty illustrations readers will learn that it is impossible to hold onto a wild thing.

Rocket to the Moon by Duplo; illustrated by Maureen Roffey; Little, Brown & Co.; Reed International Books and Lego Group; New York; 1997; Interactive Playbook $12.95. Join Capt. Tom in his adventures on the moon. The book actually folds into a rocket.

Something Special For Parents

Taking Care of Me: From a Child's Perspective - the "how-to" book for parents; by Kari Cimbalik; Destino Publishing, Detroit; 1996; Hardcover $14.95. A charming book, filled with the advice and unintentional humor of young children, offering wisdom for parents of preschoolers. From Timothy, age 6, *"I would tell them to spend more time with me."*

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 3 ★ *Edicion Especial* ★ March - 1998

LOS IMPORTANTES PRIMEROS AÑOS DE VIDA

Mi bebé tenía sólo tres días de vida, pero me miraba como si supiera quien era yo. Le había puesto los pañales y pensé que estaba tratando de mirarme. Le conté a todo el mundo sobre el extraordinario comportamiento de mi hijo, pero sólo se sonrieron y dijeron que el amor de madre era ciego. Siete años más tarde, cuando nació mi tercer hijo, lo observé siguiendo las voces con sus ojos en la sala de partos. Ahora tenía las investigaciones de mi lado. No me estaba imaginando el comportamiento de mi bebé. Finalmente, los adultos están prestando atención a las capacidades de respuesta de los bebés y es sorprendente lo que están descubriendo.

Los padres, como también los expertos en los primeros años, se han visto inundados con increíble nuevas informaciones sobre como crecen los niños; mucha de esta información es el resultado de la creciente cantidad de investigaciones sobre el desarrollo del cerebro. Revistas nacionales, conferencias internacionales y programas especiales de la televisión están trayendo este tesoro de fascinante material a nuestros hogares. A los padres se les está diciendo que los primeros tres años de un niño son un tiempo muy especial y que estos años pasan muy rápido. Pero también estamos aprendiendo que las experiencias de estos años dejan marcas indelebles en la manera en que crecen nuestros niños.

Entonces, ¿qué es lo que necesitamos saber para darle a nuestro hijos el mejor comienzo posible en la vida?

¿Qué está sucediendo en sus pequeñas mentes?

Mateo, de cuatro meses, está durmiendo en su cuna. Su padre observa sus puños suavemente empuñados, escucha su suave respiración y su serena cara en reposo. Mateo se ve como si no tuviera ni una preocupación, pero su cerebro y su cuerpo están trabajando duramente mientras duerme. Sus padres saben que su cuerpo ha crecido - el peso de Mateo se ha casi duplicado desde que nació. Pero lo que realmente no pueden ver es cuanto ha crecido su cerebro. Los científicos solían creer que el cerebro de un bebé estaba totalmente desarrollado al nacer, pero ahora sabemos que el cerebro de un bebé cambia dramáticamente durante los tres primeros años de vida.

Los 100 mil millones de células que llevan información al cerebro, las neuronas, están ahí desde el momento de nacer, pero el puente que conecta estas neuronas, las sinapsis, se están multiplicando a un ritmo asombroso. De hecho, el cerebro de un niño de tres años es el doble de activo que el de un adulto.

Estas conexiones neuronales forman los bloques de construcción del pensamiento. Los bebés llegan a reconocer caras y sonidos, tratan de alcanzar una pelota, aprenden el significado de las palabras y las acciones, se ríen cuando ven al papá, todo gracias a estas cruciales conexiones.

¿De donde vienen estas conexiones?

Los estímulos y las experiencias juegan un gran papel en la creación de estas importantes conexiones. Nuevas tecnologías nos pueden ayudar ahora a ver las reacciones de los bebés a los estímulos en el útero, antes de nacer. Los bebés reaccionan al estrés de la madre, a los sonidos muy fuertes y a la buena música. Se mueven, se chupan el dedo, o se quedan muy quietos de acuerdo a lo que sucede alrededor de ellos. Después de nacer, cuando acariciamos su piel, le frotamos loción después del baño, o le cantamos una canción o zonzas rimas, estamos cerrando contactos que promueven el desarrollo del cerebro. Cuando indicamos los colores de los autos a los niños pequeños, o decimos los nombres de las frutas en la tienda, estamos ayudando a conectar células cerebrales y estamos estimulando la capacidad de nuestros niños para amalgamar toda la información.

La experiencia no es suficiente

La experiencia por si misma, sin embargo, no es suficiente para promover esa clase de crecimiento saludable que necesitan los niños. Nuestros bebés reconocen nuestras voces, nuestras palabras, y lo que queremos decir mucho antes de formar sus propias palabras para conversar con nosotros. Pero nuestro lenguaje no es suficiente para enseñarle a los niños buenas habilidades de lenguaje. También nuestra reacción a los gorgojeos de un bebé de cinco meses, o la reacción a los a veces divertidos balbuceos de un niño de dos años que trata desesperadamente de contar una historia de nunca acabar, le enseña a nuestros niños a usar lenguaje. Los niños usan lenguaje no solo para hablar, sino que para ser escuchados. Es la creencia de que sus palabras serán entendidas y apreciadas lo que inspira a nuestros niños a comunicarse con nosotros.

Las emociones importan

Las investigaciones nos están diciendo, por lo tanto, que el mayor estímulo para el crecimiento de los niños parece encontrarse no solo en la biblioteca o en la tienda de juguetes. Las relaciones que tienen los niños con las personas que los aman crean el medio ambiente para un desarrollo saludable y un futuro brillante. Somos animales increíblemente sociales. Ya sea jugando en el corral en la casa o en las colchonetas en el centro de cuidado de niños, nuestros niños están, desde que nacen, buscando conexiones sociales y emocionales. La experiencia que tienen los niños haciendo estas conexiones emocionales, aprendidas en el contexto de su relación con los adultos que los rodean, tienen una profunda influencia en su desarrollo futuro. Es dentro de la relación y del apego seguro a sus padres y a los encargados de cuidarlos, que los niños crecen y florecen.

Los cerebros también son frágiles

También sabemos que los “asaltos” ambientales -- fumar cigarrillos, los virus, las drogas y el alcohol, y una nutrición inadecuada -- dejan su marca en este cerebro en desarrollo. Estos estresores afectan la capacidad del cerebro de "conectarse" a si mismo correctamente. Aunque el cerebro de un niño parece algo mágico, no es capaz de superar todos los peligros ambientales que enfrenta.

Quizás el trauma al cerebro más dramático es el "síndrome de bebé sacudido", en el que un bebé es sacudido violentamente, causando daños al frágil cerebro al golpearse este repetidamente contras las duras paredes del cráneo que lo contiene. Las hemorragias sanguíneas y la hinchazón que resulta de este daño puede matar a un niño o dejar un daño permanente en el cerebro. Experiencias como ser testigo de violencia en la familia, o un trato constantemente descuidado puede causar que los niños "se clausuren". No solo sufren emocionalmente, sino que su desarrollo cognitivo y físico queda en peligro.

Creando los mejores ambientes

A lo largo de los años los expertos han tenido diferentes teorías sobre como los niños encaran los eventos traumáticos de sus vidas, y sobre su capacidad de reaccionar y resistir. Los padres han asumido, o han tenido la esperanza, de que sus niños son demasiado jóvenes como para entender el significado de lo que han observad, o que los niños tienen una barrera protectora, formada por su inocencia. Si los niños de hecho tienen un escudo, este se encuentra en los padres, sus encargados legales y custodios. Es dentro del amparo de una relación fuerte y amorosa que los niños encuentran protección. Sin ella, el desarrollo de los niños puede verse seriamente comprometido.

Francisca nació con los "ingredientes apropiados". Una bella niñita que pesó 3,6 kilos al nacer, Francisca llegó a su casa llena de promesas. La madre de Francisca, Isabel, una madre soltera, estaba viviendo con sus padres en un departamento refaccionado en el subterráneo. Isabel quería quedarse en casa con Francisca, pensando que sería mejor para el bebé. También se sentía demasiado cansada y desorientada como para trabajar y ser mamá. Los padres de Isabel, que trabajaban horario completo, le ayudaban a su hija los fines de semana. Ellos adoraban a Francisca y frecuentemente le compraban juguetes. Para cuando Francisca cumplió ocho meses, se empezaron a preocupar por ella. Francisca no estaba subiendo de peso y parecía demasiado callada. No se reía, ni se estaba desarrollando de la manera que ellos pensaban que un bebé robusto debiera progresar. De hecho, el departamento estaba siempre en silencio, con Francisca y su madre durmiendo o mirando televisión.

Los abuelos de Francisca tenían razón de preocuparse. Isabel no solo estaba cansada. Isabel se había "clausurado". Asustada de sus responsabilidades, había empezado a hundirse en una depresión. Apenas era capaz de proveerle a su hija de un cuidado básico y esto estaba teniendo un efecto en el desarrollo de Francisca. Isabel no era capaz de reaccionar a los curiosos sonidos de su hija, o a sus primeros intentos de gatear. Francisca, al no recibir las alegres recompensas de sus éxitos, o el apoyo por sus fracasos, también se "clausuró". Sus sentidos no estaban siendo estimulados, y estaba teniendo solo algunas de las experiencias que necesitaba para crecer y desarrollarse. Francisca empezó a vivir en el mismo triste y silencioso mundo de su madre.

La madre de Francisca tenía problemas y necesitaba ayuda profesional. Su fatiga era solo uno de los síntomas de su depresión. Francisca, sin el estímulo y el afecto que necesitaba, dejó de desarrollarse normalmente. El medio ambiente emocional de Francisca le afectó su desarrollo cognitivo, su capacidad de hacer esas importantes conexiones neuronales. Pero un final más feliz es posible. Obteniendo ayuda y apoyo suficientemente temprano, tanto Francisca como su madre pueden "recuperar" el tiempo perdido.

¿Qué hemos aprendido?

Lo que hemos aprendido de los descubrimientos científicos de los últimos 20 años es que los bebés nacen con increíbles capacidades, pero también con grandes necesidades. Las necesidades no son solo para la supervivencia básica a través de proveerles alimento, calor y seguridad, sino que para los -- a veces más exigente y difíciles -- recursos de calidez, crianza y estabilidad emocional. Los científicos han debatido por décadas si nuestros niños nacen de la manera que son, o si el medio ambiente los forma. Estamos más convencidos que nunca que es una combinación de ambos lo que hace de nuestros niños lo que son. Muchos bebés, nacidos con resistencia y fuerza, pueden no ser capaces de sobrevivir todas las experiencias negativas que la vida ofrece; mientras otros bebés, nacidos más frágiles, medran, apoyados por pilares fuertes y saludables. La protección ofrecida por un medio ambiente afectuoso es la mejor red de seguridad que podemos construir para nuestros niños.

Hace un tiempo, mi hijo y yo estábamos en uno de los partidos de su equipo de hockey, y parecía que él estaba pasando más tiempo calentando su asiento que jugando. Yo le dije que si yo fuera el entrenador, lo haría jugar, pues yo creía que él era un gran jugador defensivo. Hizo una mueca y dijo: "Eres mi mamá. Se supone que digas algo así". Yo me encogí de hombros y dije, "Ya lo sé".

Bailamos mejor, no cuando nos deslizamos solos por el salón, sino que cuando nos movemos como uno con una pareja. En la danza de la vida, la asociación entre los padres y sus hijos, y la magia que crean, es el mejor y más prometedor comienzo.

Sandra Wolkoff, CSW es una consultora e instructora nacionalmente conocida y Directora Administrativa de P&pN. Frecuentemente aparece en television y en radio y ha sido anfitriona del programa de la television de cable, "Ages & Stages" (Edades y Etapas). Es directora de instruccion y consulta del Norte Shore Child & Family Guidance Center" (Centro de Guía para Niños y Familias de Norte Shore).

ABCs para usted y su bebé

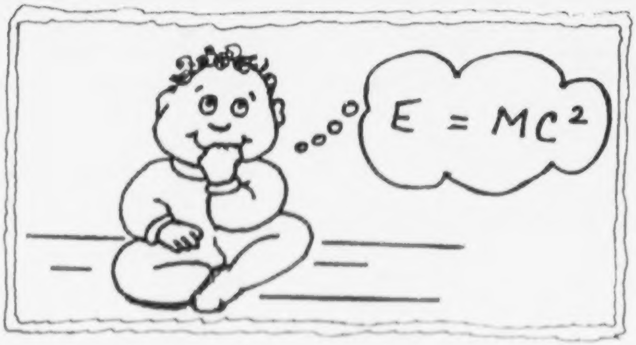
Consejos para el bebé:

- Antes que nazca el bebé

Obtenga un buen cuidado prenatal. Nada supera un buen comienzo. Una dieta saludable para la

directora de instrucción y consulta del "Norte Shore Child & Family Guidance madre y un buen seguimiento durante el embarazo puede impedir que empiecen los problemas.

Haga planes sobre lo que va a hacer después que nazca el bebé lo antes posible. Obtenga un cuidado de calidad para su bebé. Discuta un horario de trabajo flexible con su jefe, averigüe cuales son sus derechos legales con respecto a un permiso por maternidad.



- Después de la llegada del bebé

Sostenga y toque a su bebé. Puede tomar un poco de práctica, pero pronto encontrará la posición correcta y se sentirá cómoda. Aprenderá si a su bebé le gusta que le soben la panza o la espalda. Descubrirá que la hora del baño, el cambio de pañales o la hora de alimentarlo son todas oportunidades para sostener y regalonear a su bebé.

Recuerde que su bebé ve, escucha y absorbe más información que la que usted se da cuenta. Las canciones que le canta durante los viajes en auto al centro de niños, el juguete móvil en la cuna, su suave toque mientras le cambia el pañal, todos son información que encuentran su camino adentro de su cerebro en desarrollo. A medida que su bebé crece, continúe introduciendo nuevas ideas y experiencias como parte de su vida diaria. Cuente los autos en el camino, las zanahorias en el plato. Busque las letras en los tarros ubicados en los pasillos del supermercado. Cuente los objetos alrededor de la casa que son de color rojo, o azul. Todo esto es parte de su propio currículum para niños pequeños.

Todo el mundo necesita amigos. Grupos de juegos, programas de "mamá y yo", guarderías de niños; son todas oportunidades para que los niños aprendan destreza social. La clave, por supuesto, es mucha supervisión y una estructura apropiada. Vale la pena y el esfuerzo encontrar un buen programa. Recuerde que a algunos niños les toma un poco más de tiempo aprender a jugar con otros niños, por lo que trate de ser paciente.

Los juegos son verdaderamente el trabajo de los niños. Los niños necesitan el tiempo y un espacio seguro para jugar. No necesitan carísimos juegos de computadoras a los tres años, pero si necesitan la oportunidad de jugar con bloques y muñecas, con pelotas y camiones, cualquiera que sea su género. Necesitan tiempo para practicar destrezas, como construir una torre de bloques y botarlas para ver como caen. Necesitan aprender sobre golpear ollas y sartenes y aprender sobre causa y efecto.

Más, no es siempre mejor. Realmente hay una línea entre buenos estímulos y experiencias tempranas y el ser apabullado por un exceso de actividades. Es crucial aprender sobre su propio niño, sus ritmos y reacciones, de manera de poder saber cuanto es suficiente, y cuanto es demasiado, para él o ella.

Consejos para usted:

Involúcrese. Ya sea a través de organizaciones religiosas, bibliotecas o grupos comunitarios, involúcrese en programas para reducir su aislamiento. Los padres nuevos frecuentemente encuentran gran solaz en enterarse que todos piensan que tener un bebé es el evento más dramático de sus vidas, y el más abrumador.

No sea reticente en pedir ayuda. Nada hay tan difícil como mirar a su niño y preocuparse que ella o él no parece estar desarrollándose como otros niños. O que usted parece no sentir como otros padres, o incluso como su pareja, con respecto a sus niños. No hay ningún daño en pedir consejo o información de los expertos en niños que hayan en su comunidad, o en usar los recursos locales para ayudarla a obtener información de grupos nacionales.

Una palabra final:

Usted va a ser padre o madre por mucho tiempo. Aunque los tres primeros años ofrecen oportunidades únicas para un niño y su familia, el criar, enseñar y amar a los niños continúa por mucho tiempo. Nuestros niños nos dan muchas oportunidades para ser mejores padres -- aprovechémoslas.

Para Sandra Wolkoff, CSW

Sabía usted que...

Datos sobre el cerebro:

- Nuestro cerebro está compuesto de dos mitades casi idénticas. Con pocas excepciones, el lado derecho del cerebro controla el lado izquierdo de nuestro cuerpo; el lado izquierdo del cerebro controla el lado derecho de nuestro cuerpo. ¿Sabemos por qué tenemos este efecto contrario? No realmente. Pero significa que cuando alguien sufre un daño o un derrame en el lado derecho del cerebro, afecta el lado izquierdo del cuerpo, y viceversa.

- Cada hemisferio (o lado) del cerebro tiene su propias especialidades. La mayoría de la gente tienen su destreza para hablar y el lenguaje en su hemisferio izquierdo. Este lado del cerebro también procesa la información secuencialmente, como "un paso a la vez". El hemisferio derecho es mejor para las tareas espaciales y tiende a procesar la información globalmente, como "todo a la vez". Ambos hemisferios se comunican entre si a través de un grueso atado de fibras llamado el corpus callosum. Este diseño nos da el beneficio de poder resolver problemas de ambas clases.

- Mucha gente tiene preferencias en cuanto a como resuelven los problemas, las que están relacionadas con estas diferencias. Cuando se les muestra un diseño y se les pide que lo reproduzcan, las personas con un hemisferio izquierdo dominante tienden a dividir el diseño en secciones y analizan la manera en que las piezas calzan; las personas con un lado derecho más dominante las ven como un todo integrado.

- Nuestro cerebro es también muy arrugado, y estas arrugas aumentan su superficie, acomodando más poder cerebral dentro de un espacio limitado. A medida que avanzamos a lo largo de la escala evolucionaria desde una rata a un gato a un simio y a un humano, el cerebro de pone más y más arrugado y el pensamiento y el comportamiento se hace más y más complejo,

- Los niños que sufren traumas severos cuando muy jóvenes muestran cambios en la química del cerebro. Las partes de su cerebro que procesan el contenido emocional (p. ej.: situaciones que dan miedo o personas furiosas) pueden ponerse muy sensibles. Estos niños pueden reaccionar más fuertemente, aún años más tarde, a eventos que otros niños pueden desdeñar fácilmente.

- Examinar a su niño por si hubieran problemas sensoriales (p. ej.: visión y oído) es muy importante. El cerebro de su niño tiene áreas diferentes para manejar los diferentes tipos de información pero las células de su cerebro no se desarrollan correctamente a menos que sean expuestas a esa clase de información. Por ejemplo, la parte visual del cerebro del bebé tiene que tener experiencias visuales para poder desarrollar la capacidad de ver. De la misma manera, los niños necesitan escuchar conversaciones de manera de desarrollar la capacidad del lenguaje.

- Nuestro cerebro procesa la información sensorial en áreas especializadas. El movimiento de las partes de nuestro cuerpo es controlado en otras áreas. El resto del cerebro está compuesto de áreas que conectan la memoria, el pensamiento, el lenguaje y el movimiento de manera que nuestro bebé pueda ver nuestra cara, nos pueda reconocer y sonreír con placer. Nuestro pequeño niño puede comer una banana, agradarle el gusto y decir "más 'nanana'",

Neala Schwartzberg, Ph. D.

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NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year -- US$40
Other Countries Add Postage
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

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Volume 13, Number 4 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* April 1998

CHILDREN AND GARDENS: *Growing Together*

Alicia, four years old, came running from the children's garden at her nursery school where she had been helping to prepare the earth for spring planting. She held something round and brown in her hand and shouted "I found something -- it's a grown-up!"

The precious gift that she held out to me was a potato that had been overlooked in the harvest of the previous fall.

Alicia was only three when we planted the sprouted potato pieces. She watched the plants grow and helped to dig up the new crop some months later. These were memorable experiences for her. She discovered that plants change -- a basic principle of science -- and to use her powers of observation as the plants grew. She developed new skills: how to search for the destructive leaf-eating beetles and pick them off the plants; how to use tools, carefully turning the earth with a gardening fork so that the new potatoes would not be damaged. She learned a lot about herself and her competencies.

Gardening, whether in a milk container or a plot of earth, can have a lasting impact. It abounds with opportunities for learning and for developing a special relationship with your child.

It provides the chance to discover, to communicate, and to share in creation. Gardening connects your child on a very basic level to nature; to the earth, the sky, the water, the weather, the seasons, and the way these come together to nurture seeds into flowers and vegetables.

It connects the child through all his senses; touch, smell, sight, taste and hearing.

It teaches the orderliness of nature, as well as her whims and vagaries. Seeds sprout, but sometimes not where we intended. There was the time when the children planted chamomile seeds in their herb garden but seeding time was followed by heavy rains. Several weeks later, I was outside when a child asked me "What is this chamomile plant doing way over here?" I looked, and sure enough, there was a healthy plant growing at least five feet from where the seeds had been sown. "How did this happen?" the children wondered. They spent some time in thought trying to figure out how the errant seedling had traveled so far. Eventually, they realized that the rainstorm could have washed the seed along the walkway to its present home.

How can a parent or teacher make the most of the learning opportunities afforded by the simple act of including a child in this pleasurable activity? Adult interest or enthusiasm is helpful to involve a young child in a meaningful way, but experience is not required. Every avid gardener was once a novice. If you are new to the subject, this is the opportunity to share with your youngster not only the joys of gardening, but the excitement of learning new skills together.

✿ Indoor Gardening

Cool weather or limited space doesn't have to stop you and your child from gardening. You can make an indoor herb garden, planting seeds in a container on a sunny window sill; or grow vegetables in planters in a sunny room, starting them in cut-off milk cartons.

Planting a fast-growing vine, like a potato, or flower bulbs, like paperwhite narcissus, affords your child the rewards of watching nature unfold. With a ruler and a chart, your youngster can also record this growth, even graph it. She'll learn a new way to see and observe nature, and gain a sense of herself as a scientist. As a fragrant bonus, when the narcissus buds burst open into flowers, the scent is spectacular.

Sprouting sunflower seeds, planted indoors in an earth-filled flat pan, can be harvested for salads within a sunflower seedling. Let some seedlings continue to grow and see if the root size changes as the sunflower plants grow even larger.

☼ Outdoor Gardening

Take a good look at your yard and explore the possibilities for growing vegetables. It is a marvelous chance for your child to see where food comes from and to harvest garden fresh vegetables. Are there a few feet of soil for a flower garden? He'll enjoy the color and beauty of summer flowers.

Gardening outdoors allows you and your child to experience the rhythm of nature. Buy a package of seeds and see when it's appropriate to plant them outdoors. There is usually a map or chart on the back with the best planting time for each region of the country. You and your child can see how warm weather (and planting season) comes later to the northern areas than the southern part of the country.

The search for the first blooms in the neighborhood becomes a good excuse for a walk in the fresh air. What are the first plants to flower?

Be aware of the seasons. Look for signs that herald a change in light or warmth. Are the days longer? Can your child play outside later? Is the weather warm enough to trade a heavy winter coat for a lighter jacket?

Once it is time to garden outdoors, child-sized tools will enable your son or daughter to work alongside you in a truly helpful way. Be sure that the tools you purchase are sturdy and strong. A small narrow-blade trowel can become a miniature shovel for young children as they make the small holes needed for transplanting flowers from one place to another. Lawn rakes in sizes for children are available in garden stores. You can let your child help rake the winter's debris out of flower and vegetable beds.

As children work with you, they are watching and learning to care for tools and handle them with respect. They learn how to move a delicate seedling, and tamp down the soil to settle the plant into a new spot.

Gardening can also create an appreciation for the beauty that flowers, trees and growing things bring into our lives. Very young children can learn the art of flower arranging. The first time you help them find an attractive container for the lovingly picked fistful of dandelions that they bring home, you honor the gift and emphasize the enjoyment that flowers and other items from nature can contribute to our lives.

Children can participate in arranging all manner of natural objects. Pine cones, pebbles, and many other objects from the garden or the park can become part of the ever-changing seasonal display to decorate your home and increase awareness of the natural world.

By now, you probably realize that my training in gardening began early, as I worked alongside my mother and father. They each gardened in different ways, and taught me different lessons. From my mother I learned the Latin names as well as the wonderful, musical names of plants; sweet william, trillium, even johnny jump-ups. From my father, I had wild rides in the wheelbarrow, and learned to distinguish the weeds from the vegetables. I remember, too, the games we played with the bounty of summer gardens and fields. We picked daisies, carefully putting together chains to wind into a crown.

Nature Activities

☼ *Nature Paintings*

- yellow paint
- newspaper
- green paint
- color markers
- construction paper

Take your youngster for a walk looking for dandelions and pine branches, or any other materials which might make good prints or paintbrushes.

✱ ***Dandelion Prints***

Cover a table or floor with newspaper then put yellow paint in a disposable container. Cut the dandelion stems short and let your child dip the flower into the paint and "print it" on light green construction paper. Using a fine-tipped green or black color marker your child can add stems or leaves to the cheerful yellow sunbursts printed on the paper.

✱ ***Pine Needle Paintings***

With pine boughs (best with long needles), clip branches into six or eight inch lengths, each with a nice brush of needles on the end. This time use green paint. The child brushes the pine needles across the paint, then onto the paper. If you use large pieces of white paper this will make a pretty wrapping paper.

☼ *Make a Matching Game*

- Clear contact paper
- Oak tag or other heavy weight paper
- Old telephone book
- Fine-point color marker.

This is an opportunity to teach your child about classification. Help your child gather flowers, plant leaves, even weeds. Be sure to have two of each kind which look as much alike as possible. Talk with your child, identifying the specimens. You can take a book out of the library to help you learn more about the plants. Press the leaves, flowers or weeds for a few days between the pages of an old phone book, weighing it down with something heavy. Cut the cardboard into as many square pieces as you have specimens. After the items are pressed, put each one on a separate piece of cardboard. Write the name of the plant, and an interesting fact about it on the cardboard. Cover it with the clear contact paper.

Jumble the cards together face up then practice finding the pairs. Or play a memory game, putting all the cards face down, turn them over one at a time, to find the matching ones.

This spring begin to garden with your preschooler. Pick up a trowel and a packet of seeds as you go out the door. As sure as the children of Hamlin followed the Pied Piper, you will hear footsteps behind you and you will open up a whole new world to your child.

Alice C. Brown, M.A., is the Director of the Adelphi University Child Activity Center. She is chair of the Accreditation Committee for the Coalition for Child Care in Nassau County and is active in advocacy issues for young children and their families.

Experimenting with Flowers

Plants can't grow without water. They use capillary action to draw the water and nutrients up from the ground and through their stems. Even 'air' ferns draw moisture from the air (which is why they need a humid environment or frequent misting).

In this experiment we take advantage of the capillary mechanism to change the colors of flower petals.

→ Materials:

- Liquid food coloring (red, blue and yellow work well)
- fresh white flowers (either Shasta daisies, carnations or mums)
- clear jars or tall glasses
- water

Use the food coloring as it comes from the jar or create your own colors by mixing them together. Use one ounce of coloring to four ounces of water. Put each color in its own glass, then add one flower to each.

After several hours the colored water gradually moves up the stem and into the petals, changing the color from white to pink, yellow or blue.

→ Variations:

☑ Put two glasses, one with yellow and one with blue water, side-by-side. Take a flower and carefully split the stem vertically in half. Place one half in one glass and the other half in the second glass.

☑ Start by putting a flower in yellow water. After the petals have changed color, put the flower into red water.

What do you think will happen? Discuss it with your child. This is called generating a hypothesis. Now, watch and see. Were you right?

Doctor's Corner

Coping With Loss

Children who experience the trauma of a serious illness or chronic disease go through a myriad of emotions which they often express verbally and behaviorally. They may have difficulty sleeping and maintaining friendships. Changes in eating habits, mood swings, and an increase in clinginess are also common. Although stressful for parents, these symptoms should be expected and even welcomed. They are a child's way of saying "I'm scared" and letting you know they need your support and help in coping with their fear and anger.

Play: Children with chronic illness have much to tackle and the time for play seems to become limited. However, play is a primary means of emotional healing for all children. Simple board games or quiet time with your child can be very therapeutic. The nonverbal message we provide through play is "I still believe there is a reason for joy and laughter," and children need to be reminded of this.

Education: Children who are frequently hospitalized may lose sight of why all of the medical procedures are necessary. Teaching them, in simple terms, about what is happening and the possible side effects can help create a greater sense of control and empowerment.

Building a Sense of Self: Children may feel the need to be strong or brave, when in fact they are frightened or angry. Additionally, siblings may feel they have to be extra quiet or better behaved. Help all your children learn that they are special, unique, and important. Spending time with a child will nurture what is important and distinctive about each child and it will enhance the bonds between parent and child and between siblings

Honoring the Experience: Children who have experienced a trauma need to tell their story, sometimes repeatedly, until they have made sense of it and integrated it into the rest of their life. Some children may reenact their experiences as a part of their play, such as injecting their dolls with "medicine", or bandaging or "operating" on a stuffed animal. Trauma and its aftermath needs to be honored until these experiences can be "put in their place". Memories need to be unearthed, acknowledged, and accepted in order for a child to feel safe enough to move on. Childhood illness or trauma need not result in lifelong scars. Strength grows from the loving support we give our children during trying times.

Dr. Norman Fried, a nationally-recognized expert and educator, is a psychologist at North Shore University Hospital; Psycho-Social Services; Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology in Manhasset, NY.

Dear Reader

I grew up in Queens, New York, one of the boroughs of New York City, in a semi-attached house with a "postage stamp" backyard. My parents had been raised on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, so it must have come as a surprise to both of them when my father decided to become a backyard farmer. His specialty became tomatoes; large, plentiful and delicious. Every evening after dinner he'd announce that he was going to "survey his land." My mother and I would smile with loving amusement.

The years passed. I married, moved into a house, and decided to garden. My tomatoes were never as sweet as my father's, or as plentiful. My zucchini plants were always destroyed by garden pests and my cucumbers were few in number. Clearly, my father's green thumb was not passed on to me. But I loved the connection with the earth, with nature. Growing the food I ate was basic and elemental. I was thrilled when I could bring in green beans fresh from the garden, or eat the peas as I picked them off the vines.

After my son was born, he would join me in garden. Although he was about as successful a gardener as I was, each spring we both would select the plants, or seeds for the new season. We carefully planted them and watched them grow. After dinner I would announce that I was going to "survey my land," and inwardly smile, remembering my father.

My son is now a teenager and his interests seem to lie elsewhere. But I wonder sometimes, when he grows older will he plant his vegetables? Will he survey his land? Will he brush the dirt off the string beans and remember gardening with his mother?

May your seeds sprout, your plants thrive and you and your children enjoy the garden, and this month's wonderful feature by Alice Brown.

Neala Schwartzberg

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Library Resources

Books for Green and Growing Things

📖 ***The Complete Book of the Flower Fairies*** by Cicely Mary Barker; Frederick Warne, New York; 1997; Hardcover $25.00. The Flower Fairies books were originally published in England during the first half of this century. This edition brings together all of Ms. Barker's charming illustrations, poems and stories. These whimsical yet accurate illustrations remind the reader of earlier and more gentle times. The Flower Fairies Sticker Activity Book with illustrations by Cicely Mary Barker (Softcover $6.99) has activities and flower lore as well as stickers of the Flower Fairies.

📖 ***Flowers*** by David Burnie; DK Publishing, New York; 1993; Softcover $5.95. Learn all about flowers – their parts and development – crafts and experiments in this information-packed book for adults and children.

📖 ***Jack's Garden*** by Henry Cole; Mulberry Books, New York; 1997; Softcover $4.95. What's in Jack's garden? Just about everything. Follow the progress of the garden, and the creatures who live there.

📖 ***Pearl's First Prize Plant*** by A. Delaney; HarperCollins, New York; 1997; Hardcover $14.95. A simply written book with colorful illustrations and a solid message for children. It tells the story of Pearl who plants a seed which grows into a lovely plant. Although not a prize-winner Pearl can still enjoy and be proud of the flower that she grew.

📖 ***Miss Emma's Wild Garden*** by Anna Grossnickle Hines; Greenwillow Books, New York; 1997; Hardcover $15.00. Miss Emma's garden isn't planted in neat rows, but it is a beautiful garden nonetheless. Filled with wild flowers and wild creatures, "I like to let things grow any crazy way they want," says Miss Emma.

📖 ***Into the Woods: A woodland scrapbook*** by Loretta Krupinski; HarperCollins, New York; 1997; Hardcover $15.95. Learn about animal tracks, trees, amphibians, and American Indian forest legends and stories. Beautifully detailed illustrations will have you out in the woods identifying the creatures and trees.

📖 ***Inch by Inch: The garden song*** by David Mallet; pictures by Ora Eitan; HarperCollins, New York; 1997; Softcover $5.95. The lyrics of The Garden Song, colorfully illustrated, and with the musical score at the end. Pull out the book, sit at the piano and let's all sing.

📖 ***The Flower Alphabet Book*** by Jerry Pallotta; illustrated by Leslie Evans; Charlesbridge Publishing, Watertown, MA; 1988; Softcover $6.95. From A is for Amaryllis, to Z is for Zinnia, this book provides clear, colorful pictures, fact and whimsy about flowers. There are other books in the series by Jerry Pallotta including The Icky Bug Book (Softcover $6.95) and The Victory Garden Vegetable Alphabet Book with Bob Thomson (Softcover $6.95). All are colorful and informative for young gardeners.

📖 ***The Missing Sunflowers*** by Maggie Stern; pictures by Donna Ruff; Greenwillow Books, New York; 1997; Hardcover $15.00. At first, Simon is delighted when he receives three sunflower plants as a "thank-you" from a neighbor. But one by one the yellow heads disappear and he becomes distraught, until Mrs. Potter helps him understand the ways of nature and the world around him.

📖 ***The Giant Carrot*** by Jan Peck; illustrated by Barry Root; Dial Books; New York; 1998; Hardcover $15.99. Although her family didn't expect her to be much help when they planted the carrot seed, Little Isabelle's dancing proved the key to make the carrot grow. And, a family that works together eats the carrot together. Also contains a recipe for carrot pudding.

📖 ***My Backyard Garden*** by Carol Lerner; Morrow Junior Books; New York; 1998; Hardcover $16.00. A how-to book written for children and their parents who want to start a backyard garden. Contains a month by month guide and lots of helpful hints.

📖 ***I Spy in the Garden*** by Richard Powell; illustrated by Steve Cox; Puffin books; New York; 1997; Softcover $5.99. This lift-the-flap book takes children into the garden and the yard as they find ladybugs and caterpillars. they can see the pictures in the book and look for them outdoors too.

📖 ***When Will it be Spring?*** written and illustrated by Catherine Walters; Dutton Children's Books; New York; 1997; Hardcover $14.99. A warm and lovely book about a little bear who just can't wait for spring. His mother patiently explains the signs that signal that Spring has arrived, but Alfie keeps misinterpreting them. Look carefully for the little chipmunk who graces many of the pages.

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
**North Shore Child & Family
Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043**
Copyright 1998, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center; Printed in the United States of America.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
Two Years – US$55
Three Years – US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year – US$40
Two Years – US$75
Three Years – US$99
All Countries Other than the USA, Canada and Mexico Add $12 Postage Per Subscription.
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 4 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* April 1998

LOS NIÑOS Y LOS JARDINES: Creciendo Juntos

Alicia, de cuatro año, vino corriendo del jardín de su guardería infantil donde había ayudado a preparar la tierra para las plantaciones de primavera. Tenía algo redondo y marrón en su mano y gritó "¡Encontré algo – está crecida!"

El precioso regalo que me mostró era una patata que había sido olvidada en la cosecha del otoño anterior. Alicia tenía solo tres años cuando nosotros plantamos las patatas. Ella vio crecer las plantas y ayudó a excavar la nueva cosecha algunos meses más tarde. Estas eran experiencias memorables para ella. Descubrió que las plantas cambian -- un principio básico de la ciencia -- y aprendió a usar sus facultades de observación a medida que las plantas crecieron. Desarrolló nuevas habilidades: como buscar los insectos que se comían las hojas y sacarlos de las plantas; como usar herramientas, dar vuelta la tierra con todo cuidado con una horqueta de jardín de modo que las patatas nuevas no fueran dañadas. Y aprendió mucho de sí misma y sus habilidades.

La jardinería, ya sea en un recipiente de leche recortado o en un lote de tierra, puede tener un impacto duradero. Abunda en oportunidades para aprender y para desarrollar una relación especial con su niño. Provee la oportunidad de descubrir, comunicar, y compartir en la creación. La jardinería conecta a su niño con la naturaleza a un nivel muy básico; a la tierra, el cielo, el agua, el tiempo, las temporadas, y la manera que estos elementos se juntan para transformar las semillas en flores y vegetales.

Conecta al niño a través de todos sus sentidos; tacto, olfato, vista, gusto y oído.

Enseña el sentido del orden de la naturaleza, así como también sus antojos y peripecias. Las semillas brotan, pero a veces no donde nosotros queremos. Una vez los niños plantaron semillas de manzanilla en su jardín de yerbas pero la siembra fue seguida por fuertes lluvias. Varias semanas más tarde, estábamos afuera cuando uno de los niños me preguntó, "¿Qué hace esta planta de manzanilla aquí tan lejos?" Yo miré, y seguro que si, había una saludable planta creciendo por lo menos a un metro y medio de donde habíamos sembrado las semillas.

"¿Cómo es que esto sucedió?" preguntaron los niños. Pensaron un rato tratando de deducir como había viajado tan lejos la errante semilla. Eventualmente se dieron cuenta que la lluvia podía haber llevado la semilla a lo largo del sendero a su lugar actual.

¿Cómo puede un padre o un profesor aprovechar al máximo las oportunidades de aprender ofrecidas por el simple acto de incluir a un niño en esta placentera actividad? El entusiasmo o interés de un adulto es útil para involucrar a un niño pequeño de una manera significativa, y no se requiere experiencia. Cada apasionado jardinero fue alguna vez un novato. Si usted es nuevo al tema, esta es la oportunidad de compartir con su niño no solamente los regocijos de cultivar, sino que también la excitación de aprender nuevas habilidades juntos.

Cultivando Adentro

El tiempo frío o un espacio limitado no tiene por que impedirle poder cultivar a usted y su niño. Usted puede hacer un jardín interior de yerbas, plantando semillas en un recipiente sobre el alféizar de una ventana asoleada; o crecer verduras en maceteros en una pieza asoleada, comenzándolos en recipientes de leche de cartón recortados.

Plantar una enredadera de rápido crecimiento, como una patata, o bulbos de flor, como el narciso blanco, le brinda a su niño la recompensa de ver como se desarrolla la naturaleza. Con una regla y un papel gráfico, su niño puede registrar también este crecimiento, y hasta diagramarlo. Él o ella aprenderán una nueva manera a ver y observar la naturaleza, y sentirse como un científico. Como un dividendo aromático, cuando los brotes de narciso den flores, el perfume es espectacular.

Las semillas de girasol, plantadas adentro en una palangana plana llena de tierra, pueden cosecharse y usarse en ensaladas dentro de pocas semanas. Cuando las primeras dos hojas hayan crecido totalmente, su niño las puede cortar con un par de tijeras en longitudes de 5 centímetros.

Mientras ella hace esto, usted puede sacar algunos brotes de la tierra y juntos medir las raíces. Ambos se asombrarán de cuánto necesita crecer la raíz para apoyar la vida de una minúscula semilla de girasol. Deje que algunas semillas sigan creciendo y vea si el tamaño de la raíz cambia a medida que las plantas de girasol crecen.

Jardinería Afuera

Échele una buena mirada a su jardín y explore las posibilidades de crecer verduras. Es una oportunidad maravillosa para su niño de ver de donde vienen los alimentos y de cosechar verduras frescas. ¿Hay algunos centímetros de tierra para un jardín de flores? Él disfrutará del

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color y la belleza de las flores estivales.

La jardinería exterior le permite a usted y a su niño experimentar el ritmo de la naturaleza. Compre un paquete de semillas y vea cuando es apropiado plantarlas afuera. Comúnmente hay un mapa o un gráfico al dorso con el mejor tiempo para plantar para cada región del país. Usted y su niño podrán ver como el tiempo cálido (y la temporada para plantar) llega más tarde a las regiones norteñas del país que a las del sur.

La búsqueda de los primeros brotes en el vecindario es una buena excusa para una caminata al aire libre. ¿Cuáles son las primeras plantas en florecer?

Sea consciente de las temporadas. Busque los signos que anuncian un cambio en la luz o en la temperatura. ¿Son los días más largos? ¿Puede jugar afuera su niño hasta más tarde? ¿Está el tiempo suficientemente cálido como para usar una chaqueta más liviana o todavía es necesario un pesado abrigo invernal?

Una vez que llegue el tiempo para cultivar afuera, algunas herramientas para niños le permitirán a su hijo o hija trabajar a su lado de una manera verdaderamente útil. Asegúrese que las herramientas que compra son recias y fuertes. Un pequeño desplantador angosto puede convertirse en una pala en miniatura para los niños pequeños a medida que hacen los pequeños hoyos que se necesitan para trasplantar flores de un lugar a otro. En las tiendas de jardinería hay rastrillos de césped en tamaños para niños. Usted puede dejar que su niño ayude a rastrillar el cascote de invierno de las camas de flores y verduras.

A medida que los niños trabajan con usted, ellos observan y aprenden a cuidar de las herramientas y usarlas con respeto. Aprenden como mover un delicado brote, y apretar el suelo para afirmar la planta en un nuevo lugar.

La jardinería puede crear también una apreciación de la belleza que crecer cosas, las flores y los árboles, traen a nuestras vidas. Los niños muy pequeños pueden aprender el arte de arreglar flores. La primera vez que usted les ayuda a encontrar un recipiente atractivo para el amorosamente escogido puñado de dientes de león (dandelions) que traen al hogar, usted honra el regalo y enfatiza el disfrute que las flores y otros objetos de la naturaleza pueden contribuir a nuestras vidas.

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Los niños pueden participar en arreglar toda clase de elementos naturales.

Los conos de pino, guijarros, y muchos otros objetos del jardín o del parque pueden llegar a ser parte de la siempre cambiante manifestación de las estaciones para decorar su hogar y aumentar su conciencia del mundo natural.

A estas alturas, usted probablemente se da cuenta que mi entrenamiento en jardinería comenzó temprano, mientras trabajaba al lado de mi madre y de mi padre. Cada uno cultivaba de manera diferente, y me enseñaron lecciones diferentes. De mi madre aprendí los nombres en Latín así como también los maravillosos nombres musicales de las plantas; "sweet william" (dulce guillermo), trillium, hasta "johnny jump-ups" (juanitos saltarines). De mi padre tuve alocados paseos en la carretilla de mano, y aprendí a distinguir las malezas de las verduras. Recuerdo, también, los juegos que jugamos con la abundancia de los campos y jardines estivales. Recogimos margaritas, cuidadosamente poniéndolas en cadenas para hacer una corona.

Empiece esta primavera a cultivar con su pre-escolar. Tome una pala y un sobre de semillas mientras sale por la puerta. Tan seguro como los niños siguieron al Flautista de Hamlin, usted oirá pasos detrás de usted y le abrirá todo un nuevo mundo a su niño.

Alice C. Brown, M.A., es Directora del Centro de Actividades de Niños de la Universidad Adelphi . Es presidenta del Comité de Acreditación de la Coalición para el Cuidado de Niños en el Condado de Nassau, y es activa en cuestiones relacionadas con la defensa de la familia y niños.

ACTIVIDADES CON LA NATURALEZA

Impresiones con dientes de león y pinturas con agujas de pino

- pintura amarilla
- pintura verde
- papel de construcción
- periódico
- marcadores de color

Lleve a su niño a una caminata buscando dientes de león y ramas de pino, o cualquier otro material con el que pueda hacer buenos pinceles o estampados.

- Impresión de dientes de león

Cubra una mesa o el piso con el periódico y ponga una pequeña cantidad de pintura amarilla en un recipiente desechable. Corte los tallos de diente de león y deje a su niño sumergir la flor en la pintura e "imprimirla" sobre el papel de construcción liviano verde. Usando un marcador de punta fina de color negro o verde su niño puede agregar tallos u hojas a los alegres soles amarillos impresos en el papel.

- Pinturas con agujas de pino

Con cepos de pino (mejor con agujas largas), corte las ramas en longitudes de 15 a 20 centímetros, cada una con un bonito cepillo de agujas en la punta. Esta vez use pintura verde en un recipiente desechable. El niño unta las agujas de pino con la pintura, y luego las pasa por el papel. Si usa pedazos grandes de papel blanco hará un papel de envolver muy especial.

HAGA UN JUEGO DE APAREAMIENTO

- papel de contacto transparente
- papel grueso o cartulina
- guía de teléfono
- marcador de color de punta fina

Esta es una oportunidad para enseñarle a su niño sobre la clasificación. Ayude a su niño a juntar flores, hojas de plantas, hasta malezas.

Asegúrese que tiene dos de cada tipo que sean lo más semejante posible. Hable con su niño, identificando los especímenes. Puede sacar un libro de la biblioteca para ayudarse a aprender más sobre las plantas. Prense las hojas, flores o hierbas por unos pocos días entre las páginas de una guía de teléfonos vieja, con algo pesado encima. Corte la cartulina en tantos pedazos cuadrados como flores, hojas, o hierbas. Después que los objetos están prensados, ponga cada uno en un trozo separado de cartulina. Escriba el nombre de la planta, y un hecho interesante sobre ella en la cartulina. Cúbralo con el papel de contacto transparente. Mezcle las tarjetas boca arriba y encuentre los pares. O juegue un juego de memoria, poniendo todas las tarjetas boca abajo, volviéndolas de a una, tratando de encontrar su pareja.

Translated By: Tikal Translations
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send payment, payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S.A., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
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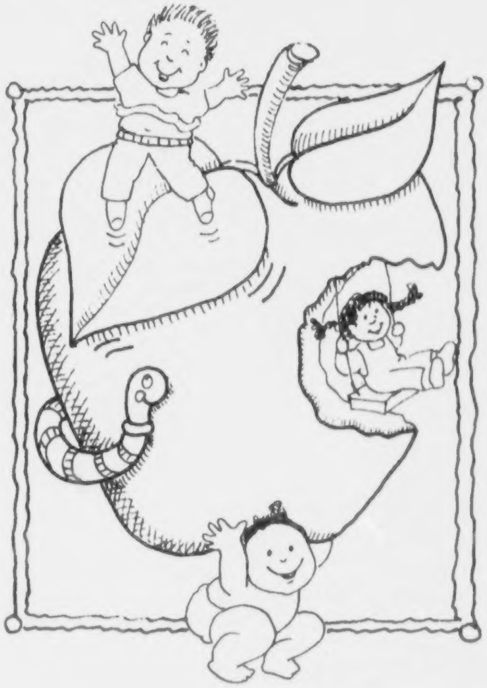
NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 5 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* May 1998

TEACHING GOOD NUTRITION TO YOUR CHILDREN



Having a baby brings joy to a parent's life, but also many challenges, including feeding. Parents worry that "she's not eating," or "he eats almost nothing." Seemingly, the little food your child eats couldn't possibly allow him to develop according to the doctor's growth charts. But children really need less food than parents think. As long as the food is healthy, it will provide enough nutrients for her to grow.

The key to healthy eating is to expose your child to many different foods, at a very young age, so that her taste buds grow with her. Children can become bored with the same foods, even if it is the only ones they'll eat. Unfortunately, broadening a child's taste in food is often harder than it sounds.

Introducing New Foods

Most preschoolers refuse to eat foods that are unfamiliar to them in taste, texture, temperature, or appearance. A child may eat a piece of cold turkey breast with zeal but turn up his nose at hot turkey with gravy.

What's a parent to do? Most parents give up after their first or second attempt at introducing a new food. But a child needs many opportunities and encouragement to try something new. Offer a new food once or twice a week for several weeks. Your child will gradually become familiar with it and less likely to reject it, especially if you are eating it too. Here's what to do:

Let your child know in advance about the new food and have him help you prepare it.

Have an agreement with your child that you would like him to taste it. Don't force him or threaten him, but indicate that we can't simply reject things without trying them.

After he tastes it, if he doesn't like it, he doesn't have to eat it. Don't run to the refrigerator for the old standbys immediately after a rejection. Allow your child to see the rest of the family enjoying the meal. He may decide that he's missing out on something and try it again.

Food Battles

Depending on the child, and the age and stage, she may use meals to test your authority, initiating a power play at every meal. What should a parent do?

Stay calm and remember who's in charge.

Set some rules to avoid repeated arguments, but make the rules reasonable so that you can live with them or you will be struggling at each meal.

Include your child in meal planning. Allow her to pick between two healthy foods she likes. This will make the meal more her choice and she will be more likely to eat.

If the main course isn't going to be something she enjoys, allow her to pick the vegetables. Try to provide some part of the meal which she will eat.

Decide in advance what will be done if your youngster rejects everything on the plate. What food is allowed as a substitute?

Teaching Healthy Habits

If you want your child to eat healthier, what could you do to set a good example? Remember, most eating habits are learned. If you think your child has terrible eating habits, consider that she may have acquired them from you or your partner.

Most importantly, teach your child to listen to her internal cues for hunger. Americans tend to "look for something to eat" rather than eating when they are hungry. Other times people wait too long to eat, and become so hungry that they overeat, or eat foods quickly available but with little nutrition.

Too many women who are chronic dieters present an unfortunate example to a growing child. If Mom skips meals and avoids food in favor of rice cakes and diet soda, how is a child supposed to learn healthy eating habits?

Start listening to your body so that your child will learn to trust her body. When it's telling her it's time to eat, she'll know -- it's time to eat.

Plan ahead for healthy meals

Many people don't have time to cook complete meals. Unfortunately, most prepared foods are high in fat, salt and sugar. If you are too busy to cook daily, plan certain days to be cooking days. Think about making it a family activity and include your child in preparing the meal.

If you are going out, plan your restaurant meals and discuss with your child what he might have before sitting down. It will prepare him for the times he will need to plan; when at a friend's house, or on a field trip. Planning is one of the most helpful tools to encourage healthy eating.

Healthy Desserts and Snacks

Never use food as a reward, but offering desserts and healthy snacks can be a way of introducing new foods to your child as well as providing additional nutrition.

Consider a frozen banana or a baked apple with a bit of cinnamon and sugar. Offer fresh fruit with low-fat chocolate or vanilla pudding. Don't worry if your child initially eats around the fruit. It's important to offer a mixture of tastes, textures, and nutrition to help your child make healthy choices in the future.

➢ *Food ages and stages* ➣

The best time to start teaching your baby healthy eating habits is from the first few months of life. It is always best to check with your pediatrician before changing your child's eating habits.

✓ 1 - 3 months - Nursing only

It's not time for cereal yet. Baby still needs breast feeding to help build a strong immune system and avoid gastrointestinal problems. If baby is on formula don't supplement with cereal. You don't want to reduce her intake of formula which is far more nutritionally complete.

Your baby will be hungry every two to four hours. Her stomach isn't big enough to keep her full for much longer, and certainly not full enough to sleep through the night.

✓ 4 - 6 months - Baby's first food

Your baby is ready for food when he can sit with some support, hold up his head by himself, doesn't push food out of his mouth with his tongue, and reaches out to grab your food.

Start by choosing a baby cereal like rice, oatmeal, or barley, fortified with iron. Use a baby spoon and offer cereal thinned with formula or breast milk. Do this once or twice a day, but don't give him more than half a cup of cereal per day.

Add new foods slowly, one per week, to make sure baby has no allergies. Start with plain cooked fruits and vegetables, like apples, pears, carrots, sweet potatoes, and squash. Puree everything to prevent choking.

Give baby about 2 tablespoons of fruit and two tablespoons of vegetables per day. It's okay for your baby to eat only a few spoonfuls. He's getting his calories and protein from nursing or formula.

Never give baby cow's milk before one year. Unless the milk has been specially processed it will upset baby's stomach and can cause his stomach to bleed.

Babies don't need seasoning like salt or sugar to enjoy food. If you do offer it to your baby, she will acquire a taste for it which will lead to later problems.

When children get a significant amount of calories from sugar they are also less likely to eat, and get necessary nutrients from other food.

Don't keep leftovers from your baby's dish. His saliva makes food spoil.

Initially baby will not be a neat eater. Be patient.

✓ 7 - 9 months - Time for finger food

It's time for the mess! Let your baby feed herself to build her sense of self. Spread a newspaper under the chair and use a large bib to make clean-up easy.

Cut soft food like ripe banana, cooked apple, or cooked pear into small pieces. Grate fresh apples and pears. Cook potatoes, butternut squash, peas, and turnips. Cut them up into very small pieces or mash them. Cooked rice or cooked chopped noodles are also good. Shred pieces of chicken or fish but make sure there are no bones.

You don't have to use food from jars to keep your baby healthy and happy.

✓ 10 - 12 months - Time to Explore!

Let your baby try to use a spoon for both learning, and playing. He can eat the same foods you eat, only without the butter and seasoning. Just remember to cut cooked foods into small pieces.

Don't force your baby to eat when he's not hungry. Let him follow his internal cues for hunger. If you try to make a child eat, not only will you be unsuccessful, but you will lay the groundwork for future food battles.

Babies still need to eat every few hours, so plan healthy snacks between meals. Carry small plastic containers with snack food; dry cereal, whole wheat crackers, sliced fruit, or cooked vegetables. Do not take milk products or anything which requires

refrigeration.

Start offering juices, but keep them to a minimum, less than 12 oz. a day. You don't want baby to fill up on juice and lose her appetite. Make sure they are 100% juice to avoid giving your child additional sugar. Add water to juices and your baby will also get the water she needs.

Let baby try drinking from a cup with a lid. He'll be proud of himself and the lid will prevent the liquid from spilling.

✓ 1 - 5 years - Walking, talking, and eating!

Now that your baby is into everything, she may be getting picky about what she eats. Encourage her to feed herself and compliment her on her new skills.

Give her choices. Two or three at the maximum, and make sure all the choices are healthy and nutritious. "Which would you like, a banana or a pear?"

Children learn by watching and copying Mom and Dad. Get her to use a fork or spoon by showing her how you use one.

There is a controversy about when, if at all, to switch children to low-fat milk. Check with your pediatrician. Children need some fat in their diet in order to develop properly.

Fix and eat a variety of foods for both you and your child and she'll learn good eating habits from you.

Evan L. Mestman MS, RD is a registered dietitian, a certified dietitian nutritionist, and certified in diabetes education and nutrition support. He is an adjunct professor at Long Island University and Suffolk Community College and the president of Appetite & Attitudes, Inc. on Long Island, New York.

Dear Reader

Most people are surprised to discover that I make all my muffins and quick breads from scratch; I'm about as far away from being an "earth mother" as a woman can get. So, why can you find me at 9:00 PM up to my elbows in flour?

It's not that I love cooking or baking, but I've read the labels, seen the ingredients and muttered "I might as well just inject fat into my veins." And anyway, prepared foods cost more.

It's really not that hard to make healthy foods. Yes, it does take some work, but I know exactly what my son and I are eating.

The other reason is the way I cook. I play one of my favorite CDs or tapes, crank up the volume and dance my way around the kitchen. Other times I make my phone calls while cooking or baking. Last night I made blueberry muffins while chatting on the phone. My son came home from bowling and promptly devoured two of them. There are few things better than muffins fresh from the oven.

My friend cooks because if she's in the kitchen turning out the family's favorite foods, her husband will take the kids off her hands and she'll have a bit of peace. She figures that's a great deal.

This month, we are delighted to publish Evan Mestman's article on helping children learn healthy eating habits. The key is what we do; how we eat, what we eat, what we serve the family. It always seems to come back to parents, doesn't it?

Eat healthy and eat hearty.

Neala Schwartzberg

Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

Oats, peas, beans and barley grows
Oats, peas, beans and barley grows
Neither you nor I nor anyone knows
How oats, peas, beans and barley grows
Old Singing Game

♫ ♪ *In this game children sit in a circle with the farmer in the middle. The farmer pretends to plant his crops while they all sing the words to this traditional tune.*

Oats is a crop with a long history, going back over 4000 years. Today, oats are grown in many regions, including the United States. Oats have been cultivated in the USA for over 300 years, when a sea captain brought oat seeds to the US in 1605 and planted them in Massachusetts.

Oats form the basis of many popular breakfast cereals and are also used in granola, cookies and cakes, in toppings for fruit crisps, in breads and even pies. They are a natural preservative so if you bake with oats your baked goods should stay fresher longer.

Do you like oatmeal? Do you serve it to your family? Oatmeal is one of my favorite foods. I can think of no other food that is so versatile. My husband likes to pour milk on his oatmeal and reminisce about growing up on a farm in Missouri and the cream from their dairy cow.

⇨ Toppings for Oatmeal

Here's a list of toppings to make oatmeal a delicious way for your preschooler to start her day. Because plain oatmeal has no sugar, even if you add a spoonful at the table there will still be less than in many breakfast cereals.

- Brown sugar and cinnamon
- Honey (for children over one-year-old)
- Maple syrup
- Raisins
- Milk
- Chopped fresh fruit

Although oatmeal can be added into fruit toppings, spice cakes and hearty muffins, oatmeal cookies are a very popular way for preschoolers to enjoy the benefits of oats.

My Favorite Oatmeal Cookies

3/4 cup margarine, softened
1 1/4 cups firmly packed brown sugar
1 egg
1/3 cup milk or water
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
3 cups quick (1 minute) oats
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup raisins (optional)
1 cup walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Children can help grease cookie sheets, and measure ingredients. Beat margarine, sugar, egg, milk, and vanilla. Add oats, flour, baking soda, and salt. Stir in raisins and walnuts. Kids can help drop teaspoonfuls (or handfuls if their hands are washed well first) of dough two inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake for 10-12 minutes or until light brown. Let cool one minute on cookie sheet then remove to baking racks to cool completely. Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

♦ Types of Oats

- Instant Oatmeal is finely ground oats to which boiling water is added.
- One-Minute, or quick oats are coarsely ground, easy to make in the morning. They really do cook in one minute.
- Old-Fashioned, or rolled oats, are round and flat and larger than one-minute oats. They cook into hearty oatmeal in five minutes.
- Oat Bran is the bran or outer seed casing of the oat and is high in fiber.
- Oat Flour is oats ground to a fine texture. It adds a delicate taste to baked goods.

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Library Resources

For Parents

📖 ***Baby Let's Eat*** by Rena Coyle with Patricia Messing; illustrations by Sandra Forrest; Workman Publishing Company; New York, 1987; Spiral book, $9.95. Contains solid nutrition information as well as menu ideas and recipes for children ages 6 months to 36 months.

📖 ***Cookie Critters: A cookbook and cookie cutter set*** by Debora Pearson; illustrations by Vlasta Van Kampen; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1997; Activity package, $16.99. Recipes for you to make with your child. Provides a basic cookie recipe and engaging variations. The complete set includes the recipe book and 14 plastic colorful animal-shaped cookie cutters and an oven-safe cookie sheet.

📖 ***Cooking Art*** by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Jean Potter; illustrations by Ronni Roseman-Hall; Gryphon House; Beltsville, MD, 1997; Softcover, $14.95. Usually parents discourage children from playing with their food, but with this clever book children can create and eat AB C-heese Broil for lunch or a Potted Salad which looks like a flower arrangement. Recipes are categorized by time to create, type of food (e.g. dessert, sandwich) and difficulty level. Also contains pet food recipes (to feed the animals) and table decorations.

📖 ***50 Simple Things You Can Do to Raise a Child Who is Physically Fit*** by Joanne Landy and Keith Burridge; Arco Macmillan; New York, 1997; Softcover, $11.95. Contains movement exercises from stretches (shake all over like a wet dog coming out of the water) and animal walks to rope activities, ball games, and balloon activities.

📖 ***Your Child's Fitness: Practical advice for parents*** by Susan Kalish; Human Kinetics; Champaign, IL, 1995; Softcover, $14.95. Provides solid advice and practical solutions covering nutrition and physical fitness.

📖 Of Special Interest 📖

There's a lot to be said on the topic of kids and nutrition, but it's hard to know where to start. Should we start with girls so worried about being fat that they come to hate their bodies for being less than perfect? Or perhaps with parents who fear that pudgy babies will grow to be overweight or unhealthy adults.

But wherever we start, we end up in the same place; the difficulty parents face providing kids with appropriate messages about food and eating. The notion of a sensible diet seems to have vanished. In its place are fads and fears.

These three books represent different views of the same issue; feeding kids. But they all agree on the basics; sensible eating and physical activity.

📖 ***Fat-Proof Your Child*** by Joseph C. Piscatella; Workman Publishing; New York, 1997 Softcover, $15.95. Mr. Piscatella notes with appropriate concern that too many kids (ages 6 to 18) are overweight and out-of-shape. He comes to this concern honestly, from his own experiences growing up, and from his coronary bypass surgery at age 32. Mr. Piscatella notes that it is easy for us to serve, and for our kids to eat (both in and out of the home), foods which are high in fat, sugar, and salt. He provides solid information on nutrition, sensible physical activity, and recipes which everyone would enjoy.

📖 ***Afraid to Eat: Children and teens in weight crisis*** by Frances M. Berg; Healthy Weight Publishing Network; Hettinger, ND, 1997; Softcover, $17.95. Ms. Berg presents the other side of the eating/feeding dilemma; weight and eating becoming an obsessive concern. Parents' fears of raising a fat child can end up causing serious eating disorders. She notes with appropriate alarm that children, as young as first graders, worry about their weight, and that children who do not meet society's ideal of thin can suffer from poor self-image and develop eating disorders. Her solution? Good solid eating habits and an active lifestyle. Her goal is to provide the message that parents and children need to eat normally, live actively, develop self-respect and appreciate size diversity.

📖 ***How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much*** by Ellyn Satter; Bull Publishing Company; Palo Alto, CA, 1987; Softcover, $16.95. Ms. Satter, who is both a certified social worker and a registered dietitian, presents a very sensible approach to feeding children, birth to adolescence, and ways to raise a child who enjoys eating, appropriately. This book walks the middle ground between concern over children eating too much food and children afraid to eat for fear of gaining weight. It is a sensible, balanced book. "Parents are responsible for what is presented to eat and the manner in which it is presented. Children are responsible for how much, and even whether, they eat." The book doesn't present as much nutritional information as can be found elsewhere, but for every parent who found himself or herself locked in a food battle with a youngster...this book offers a solution.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.
Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send check or money order payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S.A., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
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All Countries Other than USA, Canada, and Mexico Add $12 Postage Per Subscription
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 5 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* May 1998

ENSEÑANDO BUENA NUTRICIÓN A SUS NIÑOS

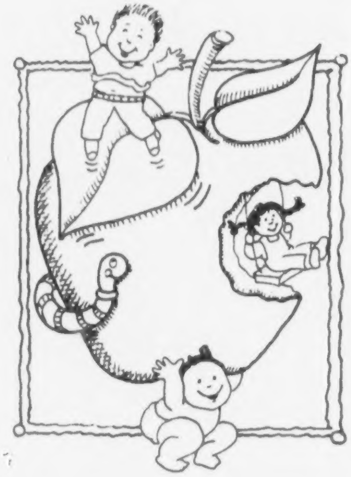
Tener un bebé trae regocijo a la vida de los padres, pero también muchos desafíos, incluyendo la alimentación. Los padres se preocupan porque "ella no come," o "él no come casi nada". Aparentemente, el poco alimento que su niño come no debería permitirle desarrollarse según los gráficos de crecimiento del doctor. Pero los niños realmente necesitan menos alimento que lo que los padres piensan. Mientras el alimento sea saludable, proveerá los alimentos suficientes para que el niño pueda crecer.

La clave para una alimentación saludable es exponer a su niño a muchos alimentos diferentes, a una edad muy joven, de modo que sus papilas gustativas crezcan con él. Los niños pueden llegar a aburrirse con los mismos alimentos, aun cuando sea lo único que comen. Desafortunadamente, ampliar el gusto de un niño con respecto a los alimento es frecuentemente más difícil de lo que suena.

Introducir Alimentos Nuevos

La mayoría de los pre escolares rehúsan comer alimentos cuyo gusto, textura, temperatura, o aspecto le son desconocidos. Un niño puede comer un pedazo frío de pechuga de pavo con ahínco pero arruga la nariz ante el pavo caliente con salsa.

¿Qué pueden hacer los padres? La mayoría de los padres se dan por vencidos después de su primer o segundo intento de introducir un nuevo alimento. Pero un niño necesita muchas oportunidades y estimulación para probar algo nuevo. Ofrézcale un alimento nuevo una o dos veces a la semana por varias semanas. Su niño gradualmente se familiarizará con el y es



Deje que su niño vea que el resto de la familia disfruta de la comida. Él o ella pueden decidir que quizás se están perdiendo algo e inténtelo nuevamente.

Las Batallas de los Alimentos

Dependiendo del niño, su edad y su etapa de desarrollo, el niño puede usar las comidas para probar su autoridad, iniciando un juego "de poder" en cada comida. ¿Qué debe hacer un padre?

Mantenerse calmado y recordar quien está a cargo.

Establezca algunas reglas para evitar argumentos repetidos, pero haga que las reglas sean razonables, de modo que Ud. pueda vivir con ellas o tendrá una batalla en cada comida.

Incluya a su niño en la planificación de las comidas. Permítale escoger entre dos alimentos saludables que le gusten. Esto hará la comida más de su elección y será más probable que la coma.

Si el plato principal no va a ser algo que el niño disfruta, permítale escoger las verduras. Intente proveer

Más importante aun, enseñele a su niño a escuchar sus señales internas de hambre. Los Americanos tienden a "buscan algo para comer" más bien que comer cuando tienen hambre. Otras veces esperan demasiado tiempo antes de comer, y se ponen tan hambrientos que comen demasiado, o comen alimentos fácilmente disponibles pero con poco valor nutritivo.

Demasiadas mujeres que son crónicas seguidoras de dietas dan un ejemplo desafortunado a un niño que está creciendo. Si mamá se salta comidas y evita ciertos alimentos en favor de tartas de arroz y soda de dieta, ¿cómo se supone que un niño va a aprender hábitos de comer saludables?

Empiece a escuchar a su cuerpo de manera que su niño aprenda a confiar en su cuerpo. Cuando el cuerpo le está diciendo de que es hora de comer, ella lo sabrá – es hora de comer.

Planifique de Antemano para Obtener Comidas Saludables

Mucha gente no tiene tiempo para cocinar comidas completas. Desafortunadamente, la mayoría de los alimentos preparados son altos en grasa, sal y azúcar. Si usted está demasiado ocupada para cocinar a diario, planifique ciertos días como días para cocinar.

Piense en convertirlo en una actividad familiar e incluya a sus niños en la preparación de la comida.

Si usted sale, planifique sus comidas del restaurante y discuta con su niño lo que él o ella podrían comer antes de sentarse. Lo preparará para las veces cuando necesitará planificar; como cuando va a la casa de un amigo, o en un viaje al campo. La planificación es una de las herramientas más útiles para fomentar una alimentación saludable.

Meriendas y Postres Saludables

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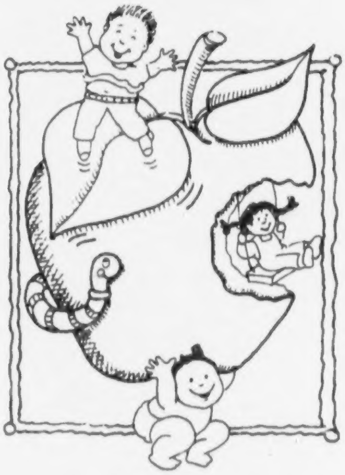
Déjele saber a su niño por adelantado sobre el nuevo alimento y pídale que le ayude a prepararlo.

Haga un acuerdo con su niño que a usted le gustaría que él lo probara. No lo fuerce ni lo amenace, pero indíquele que no podemos simplemente rechazar cosas sin probarlas.

Después que él o ella lo hayan probado, si no le gusta, no tiene que comerlo. No corra al refrigerador a sacar alguna de las sobras acostumbradas inmediatamente después de un rechazo.



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Si el plato principal no va a ser algo que el niño disfruta, permítale escoger las verduras. Intente proveer alguna parte de la comida que él o ella comerán.

Decida por adelantado que hará si su niño rechaza todo lo que se le pone en el plato. ¿Qué alimento está permitido como sustituto?

Enseñando Hábitos Saludables

Si usted quiere que su niño coma más saludablemente, ¿qué puede hacer para dar un buen ejemplo? Recuerde, la mayoría de los hábitos de comida son aprendidos. Si usted piensa que su niño tiene hábitos de comer terribles, considere que ella los puede haber adquirido de usted o de su pareja.

Más importante aun, enseñele a su niño a escuchar sus señales internas de hambre. Los Americanos tienden a "buscan algo para comer" más bien que comer cuando tienen hambre. Otras veces esperan demasiado tiempo antes de comer, y se ponen tan hambrientos que comen demasiado, o comen alimentos fácilmente disponibles pero con poco valor nutritivo.

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Meriendas y Postres Saludables

Nunca use la comida como una recompensa, pero ofrecer postres y meriendas saludables puede ser una manera de introducir alimentos nuevos a su niño así como también proveerle de alimentación adicional.

Considere un plátano congelado o una manzana al horno con una pizca de canela y azúcar. Ofrezca fruta fresca con budín de vainilla o chocolate bajos en grasa.

No se preocupe si su niño inicialmente come alrededor de la fruta. Es importante ofrecer una mezcla de gustos, texturas, y nutrición para ayudar a su niño a hacer elecciones saludables en el futuro.

Etapas y Edades en la Alimentación

El mejor tiempo para comenzar a enseñar a su bebé hábitos de comer saludables es desde los primeros meses de vida. Es siempre mejor verificar con su pediatra antes de cambiar los hábitos de comer de su niño.

2 - 3 meses - Solo amamantar.

Aún no es momento para el cereal. El bebé todavía necesita el seno para ayudarle a construir un sistema inmunológico fuerte y evitar problemas gastrointestinales. Si el bebé se está alimentando con fórmula, complementarlo con cereal reducirá la ingestión de fórmula, que es mucho más completa nutritivamente.

Su bebé tendrá hambre cada dos a cuatro horas. Su estómago no es suficientemente grande para mantenerse lleno por mucho más tiempo, y seguramente no estará suficientemente lleno para dormir toda la noche.

4-6 meses - Primeros alimentos del bebé

Su bebé está listo para comer alimentos cuando puede sentarse con algún apoyo, sostiene su cabeza por sí mismo, no empuja el alimento fuera de su boca con su lengua, y trata de asir su alimento.

Comience por elegir un cereal para bebés como arroz, cuáquer, o avena , fortificados con hierro. Use una cuchara de bebé y ofrézcale cereal adelgazado con leche materna o fórmula. Haga esto una o dos veces al día, pero no le dé más de la mitad de una taza de cereal al día.

Agregue alimentos nuevos lentamente, uno por semana, para asegurarse de que el bebé no tiene alergias. Comience con verduras y frutas cocinadas simples, como manzanas, peras, zanahorias, patatas dulces, y zapallo de invierno. Haga puré de todo para prevenir que se atore.

Déle a su bebé alrededor de 2 cucharadas de fruta y dos cucharadas de verduras al día. Está bien que su bebé coma solo unas pocas cucharadas, él consigue sus calorías y proteína del pecho o de la fórmula.

Nunca le dé a su bebé leche de vaca antes del año. A menos que la leche haya sido procesada especialmente, alterará el estómago del bebé y puede

Inicialmente su bebé no será un comedor muy pulcro. Sea paciente.

7-9 meses - Tiempo para alimentos ingeridos con las manos

¡Es tiempo para el desorden! Deje que su bebé se alimente por sí mismo para ayudarlo a construir su sentido de si mismo. Abra un periódico debajo de la silla alta y use un babero grande para hacer la limpieza más fácil.

Corte alimentos blandos como plátano maduro, manzana cocinada, o pera cocinada en trozos pequeños. Raye peras y manzanas frescas. Cocine patatas, zapallo, guisantes, y nabos. Córtelos en trozos muy pequeños o tritúrelos. El arroz cocinado o fideos cortados cocinados también son buenos. Rompa en pedazos un pollo o pescado pero asegúrese de que no halla huesos ni espinas.

No tiene que usar alimentos de tarros para mantener a su bebé saludable y feliz.

10-12 meses - ¡Tiempo para explorar!

Deje que su bebé intente usar una cuchara tanto para aprender como para jugar. Él o ella pueden comer los mismos alimentos que usted come, solo que sin mantequilla y condimentos. Simplemente recuerde cortar los alimentos cocinados en trozos pequeños.

No fuerce a su bebé a comer cuando no está con hambre. Déjelo seguir sus señales internas de hambre. Si usted trata de hacer que un niño coma, no solamente no va a tener éxito, sino que estará estableciendo los cimientos para futuras batallas alimentarias.

Los bebés todavía necesitan comer cada pocas horas, por lo que debe planificar meriendas saludables entre comidas. Lleve recipientes plásticos pequeños con alimentos para darle entre comidas; cereal seco, galletas de trigo

1-5 años - Caminando, hablando, ¡y comiendo!

Ahora que su bebé está interesado en todo, él o ella pueden ponerse mañosos sobre lo que comen. Foméntelo a que se alimente a sí mismo y alabe sus nuevas habilidades.

Dele a elegir. Dos o tres elecciones como máximo, y asegúrese que todas las elecciones sean saludables y nutritivas. "¿Qué te gustaría, un plátano o una pera? "

Los niños aprenden mirando a mamá y papá. Haga que use un tenedor o una cuchara mostrándole como usted los usa.

Hay una controversia sobre cuando, si del todo, se debe cambiar a los niños a la leche baja en grasa. Consulte con su pediatra, los niños necesitan algo de grasa en su dieta para desarrollarse adecuadamente.

Prepare y coma una variedad de alimentos para usted y sus niños y ellos aprenderá buenos hábitos de comer de usted.

Evan L. Mestman MS, RD., es un dietista registrado, nutricionista dietético certificado, y acreditado en la alimentación y educación de diabéticos. Es profesor adjunto en la Universidad de Long Island y de la Escuela Comunitaria del Condado de Suffolk y presidente de "Appetite & Attitudes, Inc." (Apetito & Actitudes, SA.) en Long Island, Nueva York.

TRANSLATED BY:
TIKAL TRANSLATIONS
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER
Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
Editor
Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.
Layout and Design
Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour, BS
Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
Amy Houts
Illustrations
Susan Eaddy
Contributor
Sabrina J. Yazdpour
Parent and preschooler Newsletter

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alimentando con fórmula, complementarlo con cereal reducirá la ingestión de fórmula, que es mucho más completa nutritivamente.

Su bebé tendrá hambre cada dos a cuatro horas. Su estómago no es suficientemente grande para mantenerse lleno por mucho más tiempo, y seguramente no estará suficientemente lleno para dormir toda la noche.

4-6 meses - Primeros alimentos del bebé

Su bebé está listo para comer alimentos cuando puede sentarse con algún apoyo, sostiene su cabeza por sí mismo, no empuja el alimento fuera de su boca con su lengua, y trata de asir su alimento.

Comience por elegir un cereal para bebés como arroz, cuáquer, o avena , fortificados con hierro. Use una cuchara de bebé y ofrézcale cereal adelgazado con leche materna o fórmula. Haga esto una o dos veces al día, pero no le dé más de la mitad de una taza de cereal al día.

Agregue alimentos nuevos lentamente, uno por semana, para asegurarse de que el bebé no tiene alergias. Comience con verduras y frutas cocinadas simples, como manzanas, peras, zanahorias, patatas dulces, y zapallo de invierno. Haga puré de todo para prevenir que se atore.

Déle a su bebé alrededor de 2 cucharadas de fruta y dos cucharadas de verduras al día. Está bien que su bebé coma solo unas pocas cucharadas, él consigue sus calorías y proteína del pecho o de la fórmula.

Nunca le dé a su bebé leche de vaca antes del año. A menos que la leche haya sido procesada especialmente, alterará el estómago del bebé y puede ocasionar hemorragias.

Los bebés no necesitan condimentos como sal o azúcar para disfrutar de su alimentación. Si usted se lo ofrece a su bebé, él o ella adquirirá un gusto para ello que más adelante puede causarle problemas.

Cuando los niños obtienen una cantidad importante de sus calorías del azúcar también es menos probable que coman, y obtengan los nutrientes necesarios de los alimentos.

No guarde las sobras del plato del bebé. Su saliva hace que los alimentos se echen a perder.

peras y manzanas frescas. Cocine patatas, zapallo, guisantes, y nabos. Córtelos en trozos muy pequeños o tritúrelos. El arroz cocinado o fideos cortados cocinados también son buenos. Rompa en pedazos un pollo o pescado pero asegúrese de que no halla huesos ni espinas.

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Empiece a ofrecerle jugos, pero manténgalo al mínimo, menos de 12 onzas al día. No querrá que el bebé se llene con jugo y pierda su apetito. Asegúrese que son 100% jugo de fruta para evitar darle azúcar adicional al niño. Agréguele agua a los jugos y su bebé obtendrá también el agua que necesita.

Deje que el bebé intente beber de una taza con tapa. Él o ella se sentirán orgullosos de sí mismos y la tapa impedirá que el líquido se derrame.

mamá y papá. Haga que use un tenedor o una cuchara mostrándole como usted los usa.

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ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send payment, payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* June 1998

BORN TO COLLECT: *Helping Children Find Their Treasures*

I just figured out what I want to collect, Ma...

Children must be natural collectors. It seems to be a trait which emerges spontaneously even in very young children. Give a toddler a bucket and she'll probably start gathering a wide array of toys from blocks to miniature people. As soon as the container is filled, she'll dump out the toys and begin again. This play is the simplest and earliest form of collecting.

Not only is collecting an expression of a child's natural curiosity about her environment, so is sorting and classifying her favorite objects. It reflects her desire to explore and master the world around her. When a three-year-old is given a container filled with red, blue, green and yellow dinosaurs of various species, the result is usually imaginative play that involves grouping the dinosaurs by a specific attribute. She might create four distinct families of red, blue, green and yellow dinosaurs as she notices the color of each dinosaur. Or that same child may focus on the similarity of shape and arrange the dinosaurs into multicolored families of stegosaurus, brontosaurus, or tyrannosaurus.

Beyond the random gathering of a toddler, a true collection usually begins with a special interest or attraction. As children get older, they often begin to develop an interest in specific kinds of objects found in their environment. Nature objects such as rocks, shells, leaves, nuts, even abandoned bird nests are often identified as worthy of collecting. No trip to the beach or park would be complete without gathering a pocketful of these precious objects. Collections that come from nature are inexpensive and easy to create, and can be the source of great satisfaction. This interest may even indicate the beginnings of a future botanist or entomologist.

Although nature collections are popular with youngsters, they are certainly not the only things that children enjoy. Everyday toys may mark the beginning of a lifelong interest. Objects like miniature cars, dolls or stickers are attractive to children as both collections and as toys. The first thing that a child will do with a miniature car is to examine it in detail, noting the color, shape and any unique characteristics. When the time comes to buy another car, the child will take great care in choosing exactly the right one to complement his collection. The attraction to the new car may even come from a small door or hood that opens and closes.

Miniature cars also give a child many hours of play. In a child's imaginative world, the cars race each other, move down city streets that he has created with blocks, or drive the family to a wonderful vacation spot such as Disney. Collections of dolls - paper dolls, Strawberry Shortcake miniatures, or dolls representing different countries - can lead to the same imaginative play enjoyed by the car owner. The dolls take on the roles of family members and friends; shopping, playing, singing, even going to preschool. As a child acts out these scenarios not only is he playing, he is also making sense of his world.

Toys are certainly not the only things children choose to collect. One young girl remembers visiting a favorite aunt's home. She became intrigued by a drawer full of buttons in the sewing room, fascinated by the uniqueness of each button. The wide variety of sizes, shapes and materials offered similarities and differences upon which to group buttons into families. This child imagined that the more ornate buttons had come from a beautiful Cinderella gown while others were reminiscent of a favorite grandmother's sweater. The collection grew as she discovered new buttons and added them to her collection.

Benefits of Collecting

Collecting can add fresh dimensions to ordinary outings. A walk on the beach becomes a quest for unique shells and rocks. Collecting can also inspire learning about history, nature, geography, or science. It offers the opportunity to dig deeply into a topic and uncover facts. It brings children to new places; a car museum to see the "big" versions of their mini-cars, or a costume museum to see special buttons. Sketching the buttons or the cars, or taking pictures allows a child to compare those from the museum with those from her private collection. A child might be surprised to find out that not everyone uses buttons or cars - such as in the Amish community. Discovering how people fastened clothing before there were buttons or learning about the various forms of transportation (from dog sleds to horse-drawn carriages and even early bicycles) can change a child's perspective on life in the past.

Collecting also encourages the development of strong observation skills. It teaches a child to recognize similarities and differences, a skill that is critical for later learning. To read, a child must be able to distinguish between letters of the alphabet. Think about the expertise that it takes to see the difference between 'b' and 'd', or 'p' and 'q'. In math, the same skills are required. Which way does the number 2 curve? How is 2 different from 3?

In collecting a young child spends time examining each object, noting the unique aspects of each, and focusing on detail. In a collection of toy trains a child will examine and remember characteristics such as shape, color, and special markings. As the child learns to focus on similarities and differences she'll use these skills to classify and begin to make sense of the world around her. For example, cars, trucks, and bicycles all have wheels, but they differ in the number and size of their wheels.

Fostering A Child's Interest in Collecting

In the early years almost every child will have some desire to collect things. As a parent, you can best encourage your child's interests in collecting by letting your child be the guide. When your child talks continuously about trains, or cows, or miniature cars, encourage this interest through books and other activities. On occasions such as birthdays or holidays, choose a gift that in some way reflects your child's special interests.

Help your children learn about displaying and organizing collections by planning a trip to a local museum. Your child will discover how museum professionals arrange and group objects, carefully labeling or describing the origins of the object.

A young child can be encouraged to create a simple display on a shelf, while an older child can make labels from strips of paper to describe and name each part of his collection. If a visit to a museum isn't practical, borrow books about collections from your local library. For example, *My First Nature Book*, by Angela Wilkes (Alfred Knopf, 1990) shows collections of shells, flowers and more.

Encourage collections that don't require a great financial investment. Remember that your child's interest may last a lifetime, or wane after only a few days or weeks.

As a parent, you may hope that your child will some day share your love of stamps, coins, model trains, or even penguins. But it's important to remember that most adult collections do not reflect appropriate choices for young children. Collections such as antique dolls or even baseball cards, may not be suitable, particularly if the objects are so fragile or expensive that they aren't for touching. A child may soon lose interest if the collection is merely something to look at. Be sure that whatever your child collects reflects her choices and her way of collecting rather than yours.

Today's Collecting Fads

In recent months, preschoolers across the country have been passionately collecting Beanie Babies, those snugly miniature stuffed animals. While there will always be fads such as Beanie Babies that influence our children, as parents we need to understand that collections based upon fads do not necessarily reflect our children's true interests, and are rarely long lasting. They can also be more costly than collections that emerge from a child's environment. When you foster your child's genuine interests, the outcome is far more rewarding for everyone.

Ideas for Collections in Play

Collections can emerge from even the simplest of activities. A visit to a local grocery store can prompt a collection. Begin with a visit to the pasta aisle and allow your child to choose five or six different shapes such as rigatoni, twists, alphabet noodles, bow ties, or elbows. Once you arrive home, take about 10 pieces from each box and mix them on a tray. Ask your child to help sort the pastas into families, placing all similar shapes together (elbows in one dish, twists in another, etc.)

It's also fun to tell your child that you're going to make a pasta collection for the kitchen. Use clear glass or plastic containers to store pastas so that a child can easily see that each shape has its own identity.

The pasta noodles are also excellent collage materials. Torn pieces of construction paper can be added to give the collage color and additional texture.

Cooking pastas, mixing and matching shapes, can also be exciting for young children. Let your child help plan the remainder of the meal by finding vegetables or fruits that match the shape of the pasta. For instance, rigatoni and cut string beans are similar in shape.

As your child's interest develops, read stories about pasta such as Tomie de Paola's *Strega Nona* (Simon & Schuster, 1975). In this tale, Strega Nona, a very old woman is known for her magical pasta pot.

For a special treat, find out about making homemade pasta. Visit a kitchen store to look at a pasta maker, pasta drying rack, and cutting tools; or find cook books that feature a wide variety of homemade pastas.

If pasta doesn't seem to intrigue your child, try a collection of cereals or nuts. Start with the letter A (for acorn or almond) and see how many letters you can match. With a little imagination, collections can come from anywhere.

Sharon Shaffer, has a Master's degree in Education and is the Executive Director of the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center. She has provided the leadership for the development of several museum-based educational programs for young children at the Smithsonian Institution.

Dear Reader

Rocks, shells, pieces of string, bits and pieces of colored glass, debris from the ocean or the lake. The world is new and fascinating to children and they are born to appreciate the beauty and diversity around them. And one way to do that is by bringing pieces of it home.

What do kids collect? Just about anything. One little girl quietly collected feathers as her special and private treasures. At some point, with loving pride, she decided to share them with her family. Another child started with a souvenir of a commemorative coin. When his mother visited family in Chili she brought back a sample of their money–and the boy's collection was born. Soon everyone was bringing coins back for him. But he wasn't amassing odd bits of metal. He was collecting tangible pieces of the stories of visits to foreign lands.

Collections add richness to life and to sharing within the family. This month Sharon Shaffer, of the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center, has written a wonderful article on collecting. To complement it, we've assembled a listing of some of the more unusual collections. Of course, don't overlook the resources in your own area. Wherever you look there are things worth gathering, appreciating, and learning.

Neala Schwartzberg

Doctors Corner

Pain Relievers

Pain is an unpleasant experience. So, it is a natural human response to wish to comfort another person who is in pain, particularly if that person is your child.

Children are at risk for a variety of uncomfortable experiences. Parents see them routinely falling and scraping their knees, banging their heads and otherwise injuring themselves.

Some children "shake off" pain and go right back to their activities. Some children need a brief moment of parental attention. Distraction, or a well-placed kiss to a boo-boo are both powerful medicines. Remember, if your child is injured the pain lasts past the immediate trauma.

Your response to your child's discomfort teaches important lessons about handling pain and injury. If your tone and demeanor communicate anxiety, your child will perceive this and become more anxious. If your immediate response is to reach for drugs, your child learns that medication is an important way to deal with discomfort. But if you communicate the expectation that whatever discomfort exists will be resolved, your child learns confidence and competence.

If it is clear that the cause of your child's discomfort is more than just fright and surprise, invoke common sense and medication.

Over-the-counter medications are available for the treatment of pain.

* Aspirin should never be used with children unless it is recommended by your physician. Its use in benign viral illness (e.g. a cold) has been associated with a life threatening disease, Reye's Syndrome.

* Acetaminophen (sold under the brand names of Tylenol, Tempra and Panadol) is the most popular medicine currently used for the relief of mild to moderate pain. When used as directed, acetaminophen can be safely given even in early infancy. However, it would be prudent to consult your doctor prior to administering any medication to an infant less than 6 months of age.

It is of critical importance to read the label very carefully and follow the directions for the correct over-the-counter dose, or consult your doctor. There are different formulations of these medications. Infant drops and elixir have different concentrations of acetaminophen. The chewable tablets also comes in different strengths. Be very careful when you give your youngster these medications to make certain you are providing the correct dose.

Chewable tablets or pills of any sort should not be given to children under 3 years. Young children can aspirate or inhale the pills rather than swallowing them. Stick with liquids or suppositories with toddlers. Suppositories are available under the brand name Feverall and, at the appropriate dose, can be safely administered to any child.

Acetaminophen is an excellent pain killer, and also treats fevers. While generally safe, like all medicines it can have serious side effects. Giving youngsters more than the recommended dose can cause liver damage.

* Ibuprofen (sold under the brand names Motrin and

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The Doctors Corner
Continued from Page 3.

Advil) has the same therapeutic qualities as acetaminophen but is also an anti-inflammatory agent. This makes it useful for strains and sprains as it may help reduce redness and swelling.

Ibuprofen is not approved for use in children under 6 months of age. Like acetaminophen, ibuprofen is available in a variety of different forms and strengths. Again read the label carefully and follow directions for the correct over-the-counter dose for your child, or consult your doctor.

Side effects of ibuprofen include gastritis and ulcers. Moreover, clinical experience with ibuprofen is limited. It is preferable to use acetaminophen in most situations.

Ibuprofen and acetaminophen should not be administered at the same time. The practice of alternating medications should be avoided. There is no medical study regarding the safety or efficacy of this practice and it is very easy to confuse which dose of what medication is being given, resulting in an increased risk of overdosing.

The important message about over-the-counter pain and fever medications is that they are potentially confusing and have serious side effects. Parents must carefully weigh the benefits before using them.

Finally, if common sense reassurance and over-the-counter medications do not result in a significant decrease in your child's symptoms, it is important to seek medical attention. Remember, pain is the body's signal that something is wrong. If it does not quickly and easily resolve, enlist your physician's aid in sorting out why.

Dr. Ron Marino is the Director of General Pediatrics at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola, Long Island.

Resources

Places to Go and Things to See

***Barnegat Bay Decoy & Bayman's Museum**; 137 West Main St.; Tuckerton, NJ 08087; 609-296-8868.* Special collections of decoys and shorebirds carved by native New Jersey Baymen, tools, nets, and antique fishing paraphernalia. Exhibits represent the life of the Barnegat Bay Baymen and their traditional skills.

***National Museum of Roller Skating**; 4730 South St.; Lincoln, NE.; 68506-0579; 402-483-7551.* Museum contains the largest collection of historical roller skates in the world dating back to 1819. Also contains collections of memorabilia dealing with the roller skating sport and industry.

***Corning Glass Center**; 1 Museum Way; Corning, NY 14830; 607-937-5371.* Museum contains the world's largest collection of glass, carved crystal, stained glass, and antiquities. Museum also contains "Explorations in Glass" Theater, and the Steuben Glass factory.

***American Museum of Fly Fishing**; Seminary Ave.; Manchester, Vt. 05254; 802-362-3300.* Museum contains flys, fishing rods and reels, along with other fishing gear and memorabilia of famous anglers such as Ernest Hemingway and at least ten US presidents.

***The Time Museum**; 7801 East State St.; at the Clock Tower Resort and Conference Center; Rockford, IL. 61125; 815-229-4199.* This museum houses a collection of time keeping devices from ancient sundials to the atomic clock. Collections include material on the history of time measurement.

***The Museum of Flight**; 9404 East Marginal Way South; Seattle, WA.; 206-764-5700.* The Great Gallery contains a collection of more than 20 full-size aircraft. At the Hanger Exhibit visitors can actually climb into the cockpits and learn about their design.

***Art Institute of Chicago**; Michigan Ave. between Jackson and Monroe; Chicago, Il.; 312-443-3600.* Museum houses a collection of jeweled treasures including decorative plates. Children can use CD ROM to design plates similar to those on display.

***The Bead Museum**; 138-140 S. Montezuma; Prescott, AZ. 86303; 520-445-2431.* This unique, non-profit Museum collects, preserves, and displays beads and ornaments used in personal adornment from ancient, ethnic, and contemporary cultures.

***The American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog**; 1721 S. Mason Rd.; St.Louis, Mo. 63131; 314-821-3647.* This centuries-old museum houses a collection including paintings, bronze sculptures, etchings, watercolors, and porcelains on the subject of our relationship with dogs.

***National Farm Toy Museum**; Highways 20 and 136, 1110 16th Avenue SE; Dyersville, IA, 52040; 309-875-2727.* Features over 30,000 toys and exhibits devoted to farm toys including tractors, implements, trucks, and dioramas as well as displays depicting farming changes from 1900 to the present. Dyersville is also home to the farm toy manufacturer, The Ertle Company (319-875-5699) which offers free 45 minute tours.

***The Museums at Stony Brook - Carriage Museum**; 1208 Route 25A, Stony Brook, NY, 11790; 516-751-0066.* A large and comprehensive assemblage of 250 horse-drawn vehicles and transportation made by the finest American and European carriage makers.

***American Museum of Magic**; 107 East Michigan; Marshall, MI, 49068; 616- 781-7694.* A large, privately held collection of magic memorabilia dating from the 1500s up to the present.

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CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

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ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.
Printed in the U.S.A.
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NEWSLETTER
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 6 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* June 1998

NACIDO PARA COLECCIONAR: *Ayudando a los niños a encontrar sus tesoros*

Los niños deben ser coleccionistas naturales. Parece ser un característica que surge espontáneamente incluso en niños muy jóvenes. Dele a un niño un balde y probablemente comenzará a juntar una amplia gama de juguetes desde bloques a figuras en miniatura. Tan pronto como se llene el recipiente, él o ella lo vaciarán y comenzarán nuevamente. Este juego es la forma más temprana y más simple de coleccionar. No solo es el coleccionar una expresión de la curiosidad natural del niño con respecto a su medio ambiente, también lo es ordenar y clasificar sus objetos favoritos. Coleccionar refleja su deseo de explorar y dominar el mundo alrededor suyo. Cuando a un niño de tres años de edad se le da un balde lleno de dinosaurios de diversas especies y distintos colores tal como rojos, azules, verdes y amarillos, el resultado es comúnmente un imaginativo juego que involucra agrupar los dinosaurios según algún atributo específico. Él o ella podrían crear cuatro familias distintas de dinosaurios rojos, azules, verdes y amarillos luego de notar el color de cada dinosaurio. O ese mismo niño puede enfocarse en la similitud de formas y arreglar los dinosaurios en familias multicolores de estegosaurus, brontosaurus, o tiranosaurus.

Más allá del juntar al azar de un niño, una verdadera colección comúnmente comienza con una atracción o un interés especial. A medida que los niños crecen, frecuentemente comienzan a desarrollar un interés en tipos específicos de objetos que encuentran en su medio ambiente. Objetos naturales como rocas, conchas, hojas, nueces, hasta nidos de pájaros abandonados son frecuentemente considerados como dignos de coleccionar.

I just figured out what I want to collect, ma.

No hay viaje a la playa o al parque que sería completo sin coleccionar un bolsillo lleno de estos objetos preciosos. Las colecciones hechas de objetos de la naturaleza son baratas y fáciles de crear, y pueden ser fuente de gran satisfacción. Este interés hasta puede indicar los principios de un futuro entomólogo o un botanista.

Aunque las colecciones de objetos de la naturaleza son populares entre los niños pequeños, seguramente que no son las únicas cosas que los niños disfrutan. Los juguetes cotidianos pueden marcar el principio de un interés de toda la vida.

Objetos como automóviles en miniatura, muñecas o etiquetas son atractivos a los niños tanto para coleccionar y como juguetes. La primera cosa que un niño hace con un auto miniatura es examinarlo en forma detallada, notando el color, forma y cualquier característica que lo hace único. Cuando llega el momento de comprar otro automóvil, el niño tomará gran cuidado en elegir exactamente el que necesita para complementar su colección. La atracción del automóvil nuevo hasta puede venir de un capó o una pequeña puerta que se abre y cierra.

Los autos miniatura también le brindan a un niño muchas horas de juego. En el mundo imaginativo de un niño, los autos corren el uno contra el otro, se mueven a lo largo de calles urbanas que él ha creado con bloques, o llevan a la familia a unas maravillosas vacaciones tal como a Disneylandia. Colecciones de muñecas - muñecas de papel, Las muñecas miniaturas "Strawberry Shortcake" - o muñecas que representan diferentes países - pueden llevar a los mismos imaginativos juegos disfrutados por el dueño de los autos. Las muñecas toman el papel de amigos y miembros de la familia, comprando, jugando, cantando, hasta llendo a la escuela pre-escolar. A medida que el niño o la niña actúan estos escenarios no soló están jugando, sino que también está entendiendo el mundo que los rodea.

Los juguetes seguramente no son lo único que los niños deciden coleccionar. Una niña pequeña recuerda haber visitado la casa de una tía favorita. Ella se sintió fascinada por una caja llena de botones en la sala de costura, encantada por la originalidad de cada botón. La amplia variedad de tamaños, formas y materiales le ofrecieron similitudes y diferencias según las cuales podía agrupar los botones en familias. Esta niña se imaginó que los botones más ornados habían venido de un hermoso vestido Cinderela, mientras que otros le recordaban un suéter favorito de su abuela. La colección creció a medida que ella descubrió nuevos botones y los agregó a su colección.

Los beneficios de coleccionar

Coleccionar puede agregarle nuevas dimensiones a las excursiones más ordinarias. Una caminata por la playa se transforma en una búsqueda de rocas y conchas únicas. Coleccionar también puede inspirar a aprender sobre historia, la naturaleza, geografía, o las ciencias. Ofrece la oportunidad de escarbar hondamente en un tema y descubrir datos. Lleva a los niños a lugares nuevos; un museo de autos para ver las versiones "grandes" de sus juguetes, o un museo de disfraces para ver botones especiales. Dibujar los botones o los autos, o tomar fotos, le permite a un niño comparar los del museo con los que tiene en su colección privada. Un niño podría sorprenderse de averiguar que no todos usan botones o autos - como los Amish. Descubrir como la gente se abrochaba la ropa antes de que hubieran botones o aprender sobre las diversas formas de transporte (desde trineos de perros a carros tirados por caballos y hasta las primeras bicicletas) pueden hacer cambiar la

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perspectiva de un niño con respecto a la vida en el pasado.

Coleccionar también fomenta el desarrollo de fuertes capacidades de observación. Enseña a un niño a reconocer similitudes y diferencias, una habilidad que es crítica para aprender más tarde. Para leer, un niño debe ser capaz de distinguir entre las letras del alfabeto. Piense en la pericia que se necesita para ver la diferencia entre 'b' y 'd', o 'p' y 'q'. En matemáticas se requieren las mismas habilidades. ¿Hacia que lado se curva el número 2? ¿De qué manera es el 2 diferente del 3? Al coleccionar un niño pequeño pasa tiempo examinando cada objeto, anotando los aspectos que hacen único a cada uno, y enfocándose en los detalles. En una colección de trenes de juguete un niño examinará y recordará características como la forma, color, y marcas especiales. A medida que el niño aprende a enfocar en similitudes y diferencias, usará estas habilidades para clasificar y comenzar a hacer sentido del mundo alrededor suyo. Por ejemplo, todos los autos, camiones, y bicicletas tienen ruedas, pero difieren en el número y el tamaño de ellas.

Fomentando el interés de un niño por coleccionar

En sus primeros años casi cualquier niño tendrá algún deseo de coleccionar cosas. Como padre, usted puede fomentar mejor los intereses de su niño en coleccionar dejando que su niño sea el guía. Cuando su niño habla continuamente sobre trenes, o vacas, o los autos miniatura, fomente este interés mediante libros y otras actividades. En ocasiones como cumpleaños o fiestas, escoja un regalo que de alguna manera refleje los intereses especiales de su niño. Ayude a sus niños a aprender a mostrar y organizar su colección planificando un viaje al museo local. Su niño descubrirá como los profesionales del museo arreglan y agrupan los objetos, los rotulan cuidadosamente o describen los orígenes del objeto. A un niño pequeño se le puede impulsar a que cree una exhibición sencilla en un estante, mientras que un niño de más edad puede hacer etiquetas de papel para describir y nombrar cada parte de su colección. Si una visita al museo no es práctica, pida libros sobre colecciones en su biblioteca local. Por ejemplo, "My First Nature Book" (Mi primer libro de la naturaleza), por Angela Wilkes (Alfred Knopf, 1990) muestra colecciones de conchas, flores y otras.

Fomente colecciones que no requieren una gran inversión financiera. Recuerde que el interés de su niño puede durar una vida, o menguar después de solo unos pocos días o semanas. Como padre, usted puede esperar que algún día su niño comparta su amor por las estampillas de correo, monedas, trenes modelo, o hasta pingüinos. Pero es importante recordar que la mayoría de las colecciones de los adultos no reflejan elecciones apropiadas para los niños pequeños. Colecciones tales como muñecas antiguas o hasta las tarjetas de béisbol, pueden no ser convenientes, particularmente si los objetos son tan frágiles o caros que no deben ser tocados. Un niño puede perder muy pronto su interés si la colección es solo para mirar. Asegúrese que cualquier cosa que su niño coleccione refleje sus elecciones y su manera de coleccionar más bien que la suya.

Modas actuales para coleccionar

En meses recientes, los pre-escolares a través del país han estado coleccionando apasionadamente los Beanie Babies, esos adorables animales rellenos en miniatura. Mientras siempre habrán modas como los Beanie Babies que influyen a nuestros niños, como padres nosotros necesitamos comprender que las colecciones en base a modas no reflejan necesariamente los verdaderos intereses de nuestros niños, y rara vez son duraderos. También pueden ser más costosos que las colecciones que surgen del ambiente de un niño. Cuando usted fomenta los intereses genuinos de su niño, el resultado es mucho más gratificante para todos.

Ideas para colecciones

Las colecciones pueden surgir desde hasta las más simples actividades. Una visita a una tienda de comestibles local puede impulsar un colección. Comience con una visita al pasillo de la pasta y permítale a su niño escoger cinco o seis formas diferentes, como rigatoni, fideos alfabeto, corbatas, o codos. Una vez que llegue al hogar, tome unas 10 piezas de cada caja y mezclelas en una bandeja. Pídale a su niño que la ayude a clasificar las pastas en familias, poniendo juntas todas las formas parecidas (codos en un plato, rigatonis en otro, etc.) También es divertido decirle a su niño que va a hacer un colección de pasta para la cocina. Use un vaso o recipiente de plástico transparente para almacenar las pastas de modo que un niño pueda ver fácilmente que cada forma tiene su propia identidad. Los fideos son también excelente material para hacer collages. Pedazos de papel de construcción rasgados pueden agregarse para darle color y textura adicional al collage. Cocinar las pastas, mezclando y equiparando formas, también puede excitar a los niños pequeños. Deje que su niño ayude a planificar el resto de la comida encontrando vegetales o frutas que tengan una forma similar a la pasta. Por ejemplo, el rigatoni y los capi de habichuelas cortadas son de forma similar.

A medida que el interés de su niño se desarrolla, léale historias sobre la pasta como "Strega Nona", de Tomie de Paola (Simon& Schuster, 1975). En esta historieta, Strega Nona, una mujer muy vieja es conocida por su olla para pasta mágica.

Para un agasajo especial, averigüe como hacer pasta en casa.
Visite una tienda de artefactos para la cocina para ver un hacedor de pasta, una estantería para secar pasta, y herramientas cortadoras; o encuentre libros de cocina que contengan una amplia variedad de pastas hechas en casa.

Si la pasta no parece interesarle a su niño, intente una colección de cereales o nueces. Comience con la letra A (almendra) y vea cuántas letras usted puede equiparar. Con un poco de imaginación, las colecciones pueden venir de cualquier parte.

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Translated By:
TIKAL Translations
212-569-6475

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
Editor
Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.
Layout and Design
Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour, BS
Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
Amy Houts
Illustrations
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Contributor
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send payment, payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S.A., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$40
Countries Other than USA, Canada, and Mexico Add Postage of $12 per subscription.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER
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NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* July/August 1998

IT TAKES TIME TO BE A GOOD PARENT

What does it take to be a good parent? Love? Discipline? Good communication skills? Clearly, a parent needs all those things, but more than anything else, a parent needs time to do the job well.

Parents quickly learn that every aspect of raising children takes time. It takes time to help them accomplish the normal tasks of growing up. Jennie is the mother of one-year-old Jacob who has started to walk. She spends several hours each day watching him, keeping him safe, and encouraging him. While she usually tries to do something else at the same time, she feels it's important to enjoy the pleasure of the moment and devote her undivided attention to Jacob. She wants to share his joy and pride as he masters this developmental task.

It also takes time to teach children right from wrong and help them develop self-control. Jim is a single parent who works five and a half days each week, then shops for groceries, prepares meals and cleans the house on the weekend. Still, he finds time to take his two sons to church and Sunday school every week. When the boys misbehave, he talks with them about their feelings and explains the reasons for his rules. He also follows through with consequences, even when he is tired and has a "million" other things to do, because he feels that the time invested in helping children learn to behave correctly is more important than any household chore.

Effective communication, the essential building block of the parent-child relationship, also takes time to learn, practice and model. It's not easy to drop everything to listen to your child's stories about her day in nursery school. But when you take the time to really listen (without interrupting or correcting), remarkable things can happen. Your child will feel like the most important person in the world because she has your undivided attention. You will learn about her ideas and interests, the things that matter most to her. When she shares her worries or concerns, you can help her express her feelings and think of ways to solve her problems. Finally, you will be demonstrating respectful behavior – and providing a good example for your child to emulate.

Add in the time it takes to support children's growth and health - feeding and clothing them, taking them to the doctor, caring for them when they are sick - and it's easy to see how parenting is much more than a full-time job. But the rewards are great, especially when you and your child share special moments together.

Turning Chores into Quality Time

What is quality time? It is time spent together; pursuing mutual interests and goals, developing positive relationships, working together as a team, and having fun as a family. It is being part of your children's lives.

Routines and chores offer wonderful opportunities for quality time. Children often want to help – the trick is in giving them jobs where they can be successful and teaching them the skills they need. Involve your children in the routine activities of the family, like meal preparation, housecleaning, laundry, and shopping. Chores may take more time when kids are involved, but it will be time well spent.

Jim, whose wife died when the boys were young, has worked hard to keep the family's daily routines normal and give his sons a sense of security. He has altered his work schedule so that he can put his older son on the school bus and take his four-year-old to child care in the morning. The boys help him make dinner by setting the table or making salads. Afterwards everyone cleans up. Before, during, and after dinner, they talk, tell jokes, or sometimes sing. Rather than a hassle, Jim and the boys find dinner time to be one of the most relaxing and pleasant times of the day because they work together and enjoy each other's company.

At other times, children

can play by your side while you work. Three-year-old Lewis loves Saturday morning when his mom, Darice, cleans the bedrooms. After she strips the beds, she drapes the old sheets over some chairs to make a cave. Lewis and his teddy bear crawl into and explore the cave while Darice finishes her chores. Every once in awhile, she peaks in and pretends to scare Lewis who squeals with delight. It takes a little longer to change the sheets and clean the bedroom, but both of them look forward to Saturday chores.

Rachel takes a similar approach to kitchen chores. She keeps a special art kit in the kitchen for her daughter Becky. While Rachel prepares dinner, Becky draws pictures with the washable markers. Their time together has become special because Rachel suggests all sorts of ideas for Becky to draw: her favorite foods, what makes her happy, things that are blue, and more. Becky's art work is displayed prominently in the kitchen – Rachel even laminated some pictures and uses them for placemats.

The Gifts of Time–Enjoy Your Children

Parents who play with their children demonstrate in a very tangible way their interest in their children's lives. Far from being unproductive time, playing together can provide some of the best quality time for children.

➢ **Play with them at their level -- getting down on the floor with them and following their lead.** Their play may not always make sense to you, but children are exercising their imaginations and exploring their world through creative play. You'll also learn about your child's feelings, and perhaps be surprised at the variety and depth of your child's ideas. Finally, playing with your child can also build language and problem-solving skills. How high should you build the tower? Why did it fall over?

➢ **Share your hobbies and your interests.** Whether it's gardening, model railroading or photography, what's important is your interest and enthusiasm.

Reading together is one of the most pleasurable experiences parents and children can share. It's something very special for children when they can cuddle in your lap or by your side and listen to your voice as you read from one of their favorite selections. And reading is just not a bedtime activity – it's fun any time, so have books available throughout the house.

➢ **Plan interesting and stimulating activities together.** Special activities or trips do not need to cost a lot of money. Some of the most inexpensive pleasures, like going to the zoo, or a children's museum, or a picnic in the park, are ones that children enjoy most.

➢ **Eat meals together and encourage respectful conversation.** For many families it is one of the few times everyone is assembled at the same time and place.

➢ **Maximize "drive time."** Instead of listening to the radio or riding in silence, talk, sing songs, tell riddles, and play word games like "Ghost", "I Spy" or "Twenty Questions."

➢ **Start your own family traditions and rituals.** They can be as elaborate as Scavenger Hunt Day, or as simple as Sunday morning fruity pancake breakfasts (with the kids choosing the fruit). Start a "kids choose the activity" day with the children deciding what they want to do and where they want to eat. Have Friday night at the movies. Choose an appropriate video, hop into pajamas, make some popcorn and watch a family movie together. Make Pizza Night. Order a pizza or buy one ready-made then have each family member decorate their own slice.

➢ **Most important, be a good listener.** When kids want to talk, give them your attention. Listen without interrupting or rushing. Remember: it takes time to be a good listener, and sometimes a bit of practice, too.

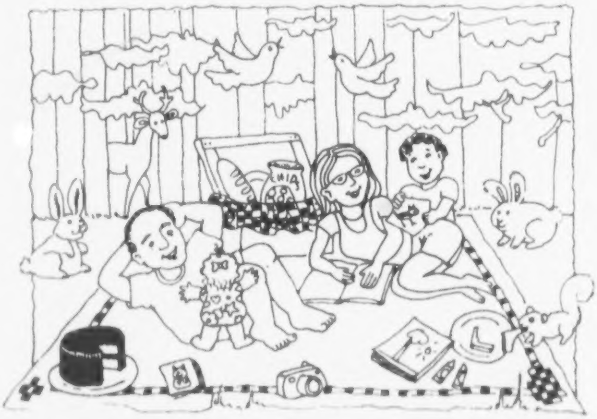
Making time for children not only supports their development, it builds strong parent-child relationships. Working side-by-side, playing together and sharing special activities provides opportunities for parents and children to communicate, exchange ideas, express feelings and learn about each other. This can lead to more acceptance, greater appreciation and more mutually satisfying relationships. As our children grow and spend more time outside the family, the time spent together today will form the bedrock of your relationship tomorrow.

Timothy Jahn, M.Ed. is an Extension Educator specializing in human development at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, N.Y. He is the father of two boys, ages 4 and 10.

Finding Time for Quality Time

Time is a precious commodity for parents. We worry that there aren't enough hours in the day to do everything that has to be done. What can parents do?

- Set goals and priorities; certainly making time for your children should be a priority.
- Give up the idea that everything should be perfect. Houses are never completely clean and special projects are never perfectly done. Take a different approach: do the best you can and leave it, knowing that playing with your kids, or even just relaxing will make you feel better about yourself and your family.
- Start each day an hour earlier. You'll be surprised how much you can get done when everyone else is asleep.
- Prepare the night before. You'll be much more relaxed and may even be able to enjoy breakfast with your children. Evaluate your activities and decide what is important to do. Say "no" to anything that is not urgent or important.



Summer Fun Activities

☼ *Set up buckets and containers of different sizes in the yard. Turn on the hose and take turns aiming the nozzle to fill up the containers.*

☼ *Make a rebus. Write a little story about your favorite summer activities -- what you did yesterday, or the things which make you happy. Then, find pictures in magazines and newspapers which depict the nouns and even the verbs (e.g. use a pair of eyes for the word "see"). If you can't find pictures, draw your own. Or buy a disposable camera and take the pictures yourself.*

☼ *Blow bubbles. Remember how much fun you had as a child blowing bubbles and then running after them? Time to give your child that enjoyment.*

☼ *Make your own note paper. Cut up plain newsprint paper. Then, using a stamp pad, experiment using rocks, shells, twigs even twisty pretzels as "printers." Or, make potato prints, cutting the design into the potato.*

☼ *Jigsaw puzzles can be fun, especially when you make your own. Glue a picture to sturdy cardboard. Draw the jigsaw design on the back and then cut out the pieces.*

☼ *Take a walk and pick out everything which begins with the first letter of your child's name (or select any other letter of the alphabet). Now, look for things that are blue. Things that are circles.*

☼ *Remember yo-yos? Introduce your child (or perhaps discover for yourself) the fun of yo-yoing.*

☼ *Play "Hot" and "Cold." Hide a treat in the house, yard, or park and ask your child to find it. As she gets nearer the object tell her she's getting "warmer," and as she moves away tell her she's getting "colder."*

☼ *Go up on the roof, out in the yard, or on the deck with chairs and blankets. Watch the night sky. See if you can find the constellations. Watch the lightning bugs. Talk; sometimes the darkness makes confidences easier for children.*

☼ *One night, when no one must get up early the next day, allow your child to have a stay-up-late night. Plan an adventure. Rent a special movie to watch together; make popcorn. Or just snuggle up; ask your child to start a story with a sentence or two and then take turns adding to it. The simple fact of being up later than bedtime can be such a thrill that your child will talk about it for a long time.*

Dear Reader

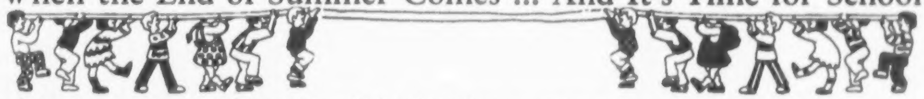
What are your favorite memories? Very often, our special memories aren't of those "big" important moments but the small joys of everyday life. I remember my parents sitting outside on summer evenings talking with the neighbors while the kids ran up and down the block. My mother saying "I'm cold – are you sure you don't want a sweater?" The sound of the ice cream man, going with my parents to the beach on Sundays, and the cooler filled with sandwiches and snacks. Not all my fond memories are of summer. I remember my father giving me piggyback rides and reading stories while he acted out all the parts in his deep booming voice.

Although it's not always easy, when we take the time to be with our children – doing things together, or even simply being available for talks, comfort and love – we build not only priceless memories, but the foundations of an enduring relationship. This month Tim Jahn reminds us of the importance of being with our children and suggests ways we can spend more time together.

Since this is our combined summer issue, you'll see us again in September. Enjoy your summer, and your children.

Neala Schwartzberg

When the End of Summer Comes ... And It's Time for School



Back to school time! For many children this will be their first experience in a classroom or in a new environment. Even children who are looking forward to this new experience may feel a little nervous. "*What if I don't find a friend? What if the teacher doesn't like me? What if I get scared?*" All of these thoughts are normal but parents do need to take them seriously. These are our child's first steps into the outside world and we can help them experience this transition in a positive way.

Begin to talk about school with your children. Guide them to voice any anxiety or nervous feelings. Accept these feelings and help to discover ways to address them. Never say things like "Oh, that's silly" or discount their feelings. One parent noticed that her little girl was very anxious about a gym class that her nursery school offered. After talking about it the mother discovered that the little girl feared that she would lose something when changing for class. Her mother helped her learn how to change clothes and account for each item of clothing so that she would be sure not to lose anything. Parents might think that this is a "silly" fear but to this little girl it was very real and needed to be resolved.

Along with discussing this new experience with children, parents can help them get ready for school in many other ways. Perhaps a visit to the library to find books about children's experiences in school would help. Use these books to start a discussion about what your child can expect. Maybe you can find a child who has gone to that same school and arrange for these children to meet and talk. Introducing your child to the teacher, while visiting the school prior to the first day, often makes that first day less stressful.

Make the night before your child's first day a calm and relaxing evening so that your child will get a good night's sleep. It is also important for parents to be available on that first day should the school need to reach you.

Remember to tell the teacher if your child has special needs. If he has a medical condition, be sure the teacher knows how to handle it. If your child is particularly fearful, alert the teacher and discuss how you can work together to help him have the most positive beginning to his school life. Then, when the school bell rings, your child will be strong and ready.

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Library Resources

Warm and Fuzzy Books

🕮 ***Alicia's Tutu*** by Robin Pulver; paintings by Mark Graham; Dial Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.99. What Alicia wants is a new tutu, what she needs is a new bed. When Grandma sends her a present, which will it be? With a grandmother's wisdom, it's both.

🕮 ***Baby's Boat*** by Jeanne Titherington; Tupelo Books; New York, 1998; Boardbook, $6.95. Luminous pictures illustrate this bedtime poem. Perfect to read aloud to a sleepy youngster.

🕮 ***Bigmama's*** by Donald Crews; Mulberry Books; New York, 1991; Softcover, $4.95. Every summer Donald Crews and his family went to visit Bigmama on the farm. A sweet remembrance of warmth and love, of family dinners and jet black nights filled with millions of stars.

🕮 ***Close Your Eyes*** by Jean Marzollo; pictures by Susan Jeffers; Puffin Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, $5.99. With a lullaby-like text and dreamy illustrations, this story of a father's efforts to put his child to bed is perfect for sharing.

🕮 ***Dark Day, Light Night*** by Jan Carr; illustrated by James Ransome; Hyperion Paperback; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.95. "Some days the whole world feels hateful, colorless like rain clouds, murky as mud." But Aunt Ruby knows how to make it better, with her list of things which make her happy from the cream-colored tom cat to Mr. Franklin playing his saxophone. Soon 'Manda is smiling and the whole world looks brighter.

🕮 ***Emma Bean*** by Jean Van Leeuwen; pictures by Juan Wijngaard; Puffin Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.99. This is the lovingly written and beautifully illustrated story of a rabbit named Emma Bean and a little girl named Molly. They go everywhere together, and Molly says she's going to keep her forever. Cuddle up with your youngster and share this sweet and gentle story.

🕮 ***How Many Stars in the Sky?*** by Lenny Hort; paintings by James E. Ransome; Mulberry Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.95. Unable to sleep while his mother was away, a young boy decides to count the stars. Soon he is joined by his father. They drive off into the country and spend the night together counting stars.

🕮 ***I Lost My Bear*** by Jules Feiffer; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. A little girl can't find her most favorite toy, her stuffed bear. She looks everywhere, and finds all kinds of forgotten treasures. And then, climbing into bed at night, she finds her bear.

🕮 ***I Love You As Much...*** by Laura Krauss Melmed; illustrated by Henri Sorensen; Tupelo Books; New York, 1998; Boardbook, $6.95. A beautiful bedtime book celebrating love between mothers and their babies.

🕮 ***More More More Said the Baby*** by Vera B. Williams; Tupelo Books; New York, 1997; Boardbook, $6.95. Three babies are swung, hugged and kissed by the people who love them.

Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

Summer Bounty

As squirrels gather nuts for winter, and ants march together to carry food to their hole, we also want to be in step with nature and prepare for the winter ahead. How comforting it is seeing nature's abundance in our gardens, the farm stands we pass along the road, or even the grocery store boasting "locally grown." We can eat them fresh today, or "put up" or freeze them for later.

Preschoolers can help gather, prepare, and cook while learning some of the important preschool concepts such as counting, colors, shapes, and smells. Count the number of vegetables; look at their shape; taste them before and after cooking.

Barbecued Corn on the Cob

✦ the outside of the husks will blacken slightly but the corn will be excellent.

1/2 ear of corn per preschooler
1 ear of corn per adult

*Peak inside, but do not shuck, the corn husks to show preschoolers the niblets of corn. Discuss the color and texture. Start the barbecue grill. When hot, place **unshucked** corn directly on the grill over high heat. Close hood and cook for 15 minutes turning corn several times while cooking. Remove corn and let it sit until cool enough to handle. Pull down husks and use as a handle.*
(Adapted (with permission) from Quick and Healthy, Volume II by Brenda J. Ponichtera)

Homegrown Tomato Sauce *- 12 pounds of tomatoes, peeled and diced*
3 medium carrots, sliced
2 green peppers, diced
3 tablespoons oil
1 12-oz can tomato paste
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon salt
2 teaspoons oregano
1 1/2 teaspoons basil
1/2 teaspoon pepper

First, peel tomatoes. Fill a large pot about half full with water. Bring to a boil. Meanwhile, prepare tomatoes; rinse and score with an X on the underside. Remove the core using a paring knife. Then, place a few at a time in boiling water for . . about one minute, or until the skin begins to peel away from the fruit. Remove tomatoes immediately to a bowl of cool water. Repeat process until all tomatoes are used. Once cool, preschoolers can help peel them.

In a large pot, heat the oil. Add the onions, carrots, and peppers and saute over medium heat until light brown, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, preschoolers can help measure out sugar and spices. Add tomatoes and remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, for two hours. Stir occasiona'ly.
Yield: about 9 pints.
This sauce freeze wonderfully for up to a year. Use one pint containers, or freezer-weight plastic bags. Leave a little room for expansion. Label with contents and date before freezing.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
Editor
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Layout and Design
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Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1998; North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center; Printed in the United States of America.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Countries Other than the USA, Canada and Mexico Add $12 Postage Per Subscription.
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* July/August 1998

TOMA TIEMPO SER UN BUEN PADRE

¿Qué toma ser un buen padre? ¿Amor? ¿Disciplina? ¿Buenas habilidades de comunicación? Claramente, un padre o madre necesita todas estas cosas, pero más que cualquier otra cosa, necesitan de tiempo para hacer bien su trabajo.

Los padres aprenden rápidamente que cada aspecto de criar niños requiere de tiempo. Toma tiempo ayudarlos a realizar las tareas normales del crecimiento. Jennie es la madre de Jacob, un niño de un año que ha comenzado a caminar. Ella se pasa varias horas cada día observándolo, lo mantiene seguro, y lo estimula. Aunque comúnmente ella trata de hacer otras cosas a la misma vez, ella siente que es importante disfrutar del placer del momento y dedicarle atención exclusiva a Jacob. Ella quiere compartir su regocijo y su orgullo, a medida que él domina el caminar como tarea de su desarrollo.

También toma tiempo enseñarle a los niños la diferencia entre el mal y el bien y ayudarlos a desarrollar el auto control. Jim es un padre solo que trabaja cinco días y medio todas las semanas. Después del trabajo tiene que ir a comprar comestibles, preparar las comidas y limpiar la casa los fines de semana. Sin embargo, encuentra tiempo para llevar a sus dos hijos a la iglesia y a la escuela dominical todas las semanas. Cuando los muchachos se portan mal, habla con ellos de sus sentimientos y les explica las razones por las que hay reglas. También acepta las consecuencias, incluso cuando está cansado y tiene un "millón" de cosas que hacer, porque siente que el tiempo invertido en ayudar a sus niños a aprender a comportarse correctamente es más importante que cualquier otra tarea familiar.

La comunicación efectiva, la piedra fundamenta de la relación padre-niño, también toma tiempo aprender, practicar y modelar. No es fácil dejar todo para escuchar las historias de un niño sobre su día en el jardín infantil. Pero cuando usted se toma el tiempo para realmente escuchar (sin interrumpir o corregir), pueden suceder cosas notables. Su niño se sentirá la persona más importante del mundo porque tiene su total atención. Usted aprenderá sobre sus ideas y sus intereses, las cosas que más le importan a él o ella. Cuando él o ella comparten su preocupación o sus intereses, usted puede ayudarlos a expresar sus sentimientos y pensar en maneras de resolver sus problemas. Finalmente, usted demostrará un comportamiento respetuoso – y le dará un buen ejemplo a su niño para emular.

Sume todo el tiempo que toma apoyar el crecimiento y la salud de un niño -- alimentarlos y vestirlos, llevarlos al doctor, cuidar de ellos cuando están enfermos – y es fácil ver como ser padre es mucho más que un trabajo constante. Pero las gratificaciones son grandes, especialmente cuando usted y su niño comparten juntos momentos especiales.

Transformando las tareas en tiempo de calidad

¿Qué es tiempo de calidad? Es el tiempo pasado juntos; las metas e intereses mutuos que se persiguen, desarrollar relaciones positivas, trabajar juntos como equipo, y divertirse como una familia. Siendo parte de las vidas de sus niños.

Las rutinas y las tareas de la casa ofrecen oportunidades maravillosas para pasar tiempo de calidad. Los niños frecuentemente quieren ayudar -- el truco está en darles trabajos en los que pueden tener éxito y enseñarles las habilidades que necesitan. Involucre a sus niños en actividades rutinarias de la familia, tal como la preparación de la comida, limpiar la casa, lavar la ropa, e ir de compras. Las tareas pueden tomar más tiempo cuando los niños están involucrados, pero será un tiempo bien gastado.

Jim, cuya esposa murió cuando los niños eran pequeños, ha trabajado duro para mantener las rutinas diarias de una familia normal y darle a sus hijos un sentido de seguridad. Él ha alterado su trabajo para poder poner a su hijo mayor en el autobús de la escuela y llevar su niño de cuatro años al jardín infantil en la mañana. Los muchachos lo ayudan a hacer la cena poniendo la mesa o haciendo ensaladas. Después todos limpian juntos. Antes, durante y después de la cena, todos hablan, cuentan bromas, o a veces cantan. Más que una confusión, Jim y los muchachos encuentran que la hora de la cena es una de los momentos más tranquilizadores y amenos del día, porque trabajan juntos y disfrutan de su mutua compañía.

En otras ocasiones, los niños pueden jugar por su lado mientras usted trabaja. A Lewis, de tres años, le encanta la mañana del sábado cuando su mamá, Darice, limpia los dormitorios. Después que ella saca las sábanas, él pone las sábanas usadas sobre unas sillas para hacer una cueva. Lewis y su osito peluche se meten a gatas dentro y exploran la cueva mientras Darice termina sus tareas. De vez en cuando, ella atisba dentro de la cueva y finge asustar a Lewis quien da alaridos de delicia. Toma un poco más tiempo cambiar las sábanas y limpiar los dormitorios, pero ambos esperan ansiosos las tareas del sábado.

Raquel toma un enfoque similar con las tareas de la cocina. Ella mantiene un juego de arte en la cocina para su hija Becky. Mientras Raquel prepara la cena, Becky hace cuadros con los marcadores de tinta lavables. Su tiempo juntos ha llegado a ser especial porque Raquel le sugiere todo tipo de ideas a Becky para que dibuje: sus alimentos favoritos, qué la hace feliz, cosas que son azules, y otras. El arte de Becky es desplegado prominentemente en la cocina -- Raquel incluso ha laminado algunos cuadros y los usa como puestos para los platos.

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Los regalos del tiempo de calidad: disfrute a sus niños

Los padres que juegan con sus niños demuestra de una manera muy tangible su interés en las vidas de sus niños. Lejos de ser un tiempo improductivo, jugar juntos puede proveer alguno de los mejores momentos de tiempo de calidad para los niños.

Juegue con ellos a su nivel -- agachándose en el piso con ellos y siguiéndolos a ellos. Sus juegos no siempre pueden tener sentido para usted, pero los niños ejercitan su imaginación y exploran su mundo mediante los juegos creativos. Usted aprenderá también sobre los sentimientos de su niño, y quizás le sorprenda la variedad y profundidad de sus ideas. Finalmente, jugando con su niño también podrá ayudar a construir las capacidades del lenguaje y la resolución de problemas. ¿Cuan alto debe construirse la torre? ¿Por qué se cayó?

Comparta sus aficiones y sus intereses. Si cultiva el jardín, colecciona modelos de trenes o toma fotografías, lo que es importante es su interés y entusiasmo.

Leer juntos es una de las experiencias más placenteras que pueden compartir padres y niños. Es algo muy especial para los niños cuando pueden acurrucarse en su regazo o a su lado y escuchar su voz mientras usted lee de una de sus seleccíiones favoritas. Y la lectura no es simplemente una actividad para la hora de acostarse -- es entretenido en cualquier momento, así es que tenga libros disponibles por toda la casa.

Planifique actividades estimulantes e interesantes que puedan hacer juntos. Los viajes o actividades especiales no necesitan costar mucho dinero. De hecho, algunos de los placeres más baratos, como ir al zoológico, o al museo de niños, o hasta un picnic en el parque, son los que los niños disfrutan más.

Coma junto con sus niños y fomente la conversación respetuosa. Para muchas familias es una de las pocas veces en que todos se juntan a la vez en el mismo lugar.

Maximice el beneficio del "tiempo en el auto". En vez de escuchar la radio o viajar en silencio, converse, cante canciones, cuente acertijos, y juegue juegos de palabras como "Fantasma" , "Yo espío", o "Veinte preguntas".

Comience sus propios rituales y tradiciones familiares. Estos pueden ser tan elaborados como el "Día de Caza", o tan simples como desayunos los domingos en la mañana con "panqueques de frutas" (los niños eligen la fruta). Comience un día en que "los niños escogen la actividad", con los niños decidiendo lo que ellos quieren hacer y donde quieren comer. Ir los viernes por la noche al cine. Escoger un video apropiado, ponerse los pijamas, hacer cabritas de maíz y ver la película juntos. Hacer una "Noche de Piza". Mandar pedir una piza o comprar una preparada, y hacer que cada miembro de la familia decore su propia tajada. Quizás todos pueden trabajar juntos para hacer una "cara de piza".

Lo más importante es saber escuchar. Cuando los niños quieren hablar, déles su atención. Escuche sin interrumpir o apurarlos. Recuerde: toma tiempo ser un buen escuchante, y a veces una pizca de práctica, también.

Encontrando el tiempo para dar tiempo de calidad

El tiempo es una mercancía preciosa para los padres. Nos preocupamos de que no hay horas suficientes en el día para hacer todo lo que se tiene que hacerse. ¿Qué pueden hacer padres? Ponga prioridades y metas; por cierto que encontrar tiempo para sus niños debería ser una prioridad.

* Abandone la idea de que todo debe ser perfecto. Las casas nunca estarán completamente limpias y los proyectos especiales nunca estarán perfectamente hechos. Tome un enfoque diferente: haga lo mejor que pueda y déjelo, sabiendo que jugando con sus niños, o simplemente relajándose con ellos lo harán sentirse mejor respecto a usted mismo y su familia

* Comience cada día una hora más temprano. Se sorprenderá de cuánto más puede hacer cuando todos los demás duermen.

* Prepárese la noche anterior. Estará mucho más relajada y hasta podrá disfrutar del desayuno con sus niños. Evalúe sus actividades y decida que hay que hacer que sea importante. Diga que "no" a cualquier cosa que no es urgente o importante.

Encontrar tiempo para sus niños no solamente apoya su desarrollo, sino que también construye fuertes relaciones entre los padres y el niño. Trabajando lado a lado, jugando juntos y compartiendo actividades especiales, todo esto provee oportunidades de comunicarse para padres y niños, cambiar ideas, expresar sentimientos, y aprender sobre el uno y el otro. Esto puede llevar a más aceptación, mayor apreciación y relaciones más mutuamente satisfactorias. A medida que los niños crecen y pasan más tiempo fuera de la familia, el tiempo pasado juntos hoy formará los cimientos de su relación para mañana.

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Translated By:
TIKAL Translations
(212) 569-6475

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Layout and Design
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Preschooler in the Kitchen Plus
Amy Houts
Illustrations
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Contributor
Sabrina J. Yazdpour
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send payment, payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S.A., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year -- US$40
Countries Other than USA, Canada, and Mexico Add Postage of $12 per subscription.
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 8 ★ *Special Six-Page Edition* ★ **September 1998**

YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY: *A Community Treasure for Parents & Preschoolers*

At the top of parents' wish lists for their young children, as they approach the school years, is that their children learn to read. One of your best allies in creating a strong foundation for your children's successful reading is as near as your local public library.

Libraries are losing their quiet, stuffy images. More and more, they are welcoming their youngest patrons with an array of creative programming, hands-on activities involving puzzles and art materials, early childhood computer software, and access to the new technologies. Besides the opportunities they offer in the library itself, circulating collections may include videos, audiocassettes, compact discs, book-cassette combinations, toys, puzzles, computer software, and CD ROM products. But fundamental to all of these wonderful new resources is what libraries have been providing for years -- access to information in abundance-- and especially books. There are board books for infants and toddlers, and those glorious picture books so perfect for capturing the preschooler's imagination.

Immersing our young children in language is perhaps the best thing we can do to prepare them for reading success. This means language in all its forms -- from singing, cooing, and chanting those familiar nursery rhymes to babies, to the naming of objects and activities in toddlerhood, to the fascinating conversations we can share with preschoolers.

The sharing of books can fuel and stimulate this wonderful immersion in language and provide a very special experience for our children that they will remember into adulthood. Children who are read to early and often, and who visit the library regularly, learn early the joy of books and reading. They become familiar with the feel of books and comfortable handling them, turning the pages, and starting at the beginning. They learn that there is a connection between words, language and those symbols on the page, and they will even tell you the story of familiar books using the pictures as cues.

As you read, encourage children to ask questions, repeat words, and have fun. If they're too young to sit while you read the whole story word-for-word, make up your own shortened version, following the pictures closely to maintain their interest, and asking questions to keep them engaged. Encourage your children to name the familiar people or objects in the book, or have them tell you the story. Have fun by changing voices for different characters and choosing books that you like. The closeness and comfort with the written word, which occurs so naturally through the sharing of books between parent and child, are the underpinnings of eventual reading success.

🕮 Using the Library

Don't wait to get started on the library habit - infancy is not too soon. You can share those colorful board books and borrow lullabies, children's songs and nursery rhymes on CD or tape. They'll fill your home with music and refresh your memory of those rhymes that are so effective in introducing language to the new baby.

Get children their own library cards as soon as possible and make the library a weekly treat to share together. The public library is a wonderful place to gather with other parents and young children.

Take out lots of books so you can offer your child a wide variety. Keep in mind that children's attention spans vary and the idea is to have fun reading together. If your child wants to go from book to book, or change books in the middle of the story, don't make it a struggle. You can try to redirect your child's interest by asking her questions about one of the pictures, or by tying the story to her own experiences. But if that doesn't work, it's best to let your child take the lead. Children's exploration of language, not the content of the story, is most important and nothing will be gained by coercing participation.

It is common for children to have favorite books and ask you repeatedly to read them. It may get a little boring for you but children never seem to tire of hearing those familiar favorites. Just keep introducing a few new books along with the regulars. Let children do some of the selecting and ask the librarian for suggestions appropriate to your child's age and interests.

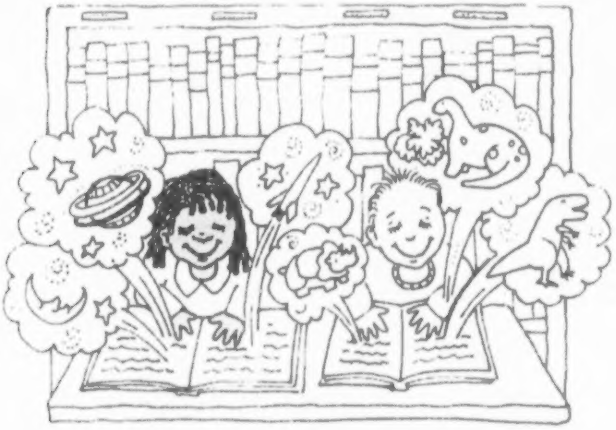
Get to know the children's librarians and have your child get to know them too. These librarians are trained professionals who can help you with book selection, and keep you informed about new programs and services.

As children get older and need assistance with school projects, your children should think of the librarian as a helping adult to whom they can turn.

Inquire about children's programming. In addition to the typical story times, there may be art, music, or science programs, plays or puppet shows. Some libraries even have pets that live in the Children's Room; gerbils, rabbits, and hamsters often with names from familiar children's books. Ask about Mother Goose nursery rhyme programs, Parent-Child Workshops, a fun-filled, play-based program for toddlers and parents or caregivers. Libraries may also offer programs in the evening or on weekends to appeal to working parents.

Some libraries provide computer access for children. They seem to take to the interactive and colorful stimulation of the best early childhood software programs like ducks to water. Find out what your library has to offer in the way of technology and, even if you're a novice, sit with your preschooler and give it a try. Those very basic early childhood programs may be just what you need to help you become comfortable with computers, and your child will undoubtedly love them, too.

Some children have such a wonderful time at the library, they hate to leave. To ease this transition from the library, develop some sort of regular routine that signals the end of the visit - a stop at the water fountain on the way out, a goodbye visit to the stuffed animals or other library landmark that has caught their imagination, or let them carry their books to the checkout desk. The routine becomes an anticipated part of the visit and can help to keep your exit smooth and struggle free.



Remember to borrow in abundance and keep your home stocked with a rich variety of choices for your child. The library is the best bargain in town so enjoy these shared community resources without breaking your budget.

Libraries are for parents too

Don't overlook your own needs. Children's departments often take the lead in parenting services offering support groups, parenting workshops, and more. It's also a great way to meet other parents, learn about baby care, or both! Special collections (often found in the children's room) include books, videos and magazines with information on child development, parenting concerns, special health and medical issues, and recreational activities.

New technologies put once remote databases at your fingertips. The Internet and the World Wide Web provide instant access to information on every imaginable subject. The National Parents Information Network (NPIN), located on the Internet (http://npin.org), is a reputable, well monitored and well maintained Internet site that provides links to hundreds of other Internet sites for parents. Many libraries also maintain information and referral files to help locate local services. The librarian is your information specialist as well as your child's so don't hesitate to ask for assistance.

If your library is still an untapped resource, pay a visit today. It is wonderful, free, right in the heart of your community, and a safe and comfortable place for families to spend some time together and meet other families with young children as well. Libraries are public treasures - use them and enjoy!

Barbara Jordan is Head of Parenting and Clearinghouse Services at Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, NY. Middle Country Public Library has recently been designated the national model for the "Family Place Project," an initiative to promote family-centered services in public libraries.

Something Special for Parents

50 Simple Things You Can Do to Raise a Child Who Loves to Read by Kathy A. Zahler, MA; Arco/ Macmillan; New York, 1997; Softcover $11.95

Reading in the home is the number one predictor of success in school. There are many ways to incorporate reading into your life and this book has fifty of them! Some of them are:

- Share information from your own reading.
- Take books with you wherever you go.
- Subscribe to children's magazines.
- Watch for TV or movie tie-ins.
- Take advantage of holiday related books.
- Act out favorite scenes from books as a family.
- Have children evaluate stories.

There is a wealth of information in this book and even kids who don't like to read will find themselves eager to participate.

When English is Your Second Language

Raising Joyfully Literate Youngsters

You are your child's first and most important teacher. The language you use with your child is one of the most powerful tools you have to teach her about the world; giving her a sense of identity and belonging, and passing on your beliefs, values, and culture. Regardless of which language you use with your child – English, Spanish, Farsi, Chinese, Ilocano, Haitian Creole – **you** are your child's most important teacher.

Language Skills Transfer From One Language to Another

You can help your child learn to read English even if you yourself cannot read or speak English. Reading in any language is much more than connecting sounds to letters and words. Reading depends on your child's prior experiences with the world and her ability to use language, either spoken or gestural, to communicate.

Research shows us that the children who become the best speakers and readers are those with strong language skills in at least one language, regardless of which one. The better a child understands and uses language as a tool to communicate and connect with others, whatever language that may be, the more successful she will be in learning English. Why? Skills transfer from one language to another.

A similar situation occurs with reading skills. Children who enter school with reading ability in their home language, even when their language is dramatically different from English, develop reading skills in English faster than a classmate who has no, or only minimal, literacy skills in her home language. There is clearly something universal about reading – the ability to understand and relate to the meaning of the symbols on a page.

There is also a strong connection between speech and literacy; children's reading skills are built on their speaking skills. A young child's ability to use language in a variety of ways such as getting his needs met ("More juice") controlling the behaviors of others ("Stop that!"), talking to his friends ("Are you still my friend?"), asking questions about his world ("What makes thunder?"), and informing others of his discoveries about his world, is connected to his later ability to read.

Provide Varied Language Activities

A recent national research study has proven, once again, that young children need varied experiences with language in order to become successful readers. These experiences include singing songs and chants, playing with words and sounds, making rhymes, using exaggerated intonation patterns, and playing finger games such as *Ten Little Monkeys* or *Round-a Bit.*

Draw your child's attention to the initial sounds in names: Luis' name starts just like Lurayha's name, like the sound of the street we walk on, Lakewood Avenue. This can be done in any language since all languages are comprised of a set number of basic sounds.

Talk and Listen to Your Child

Most of all, young children need true opportunities to talk and to be heard by people who are genuinely interested in what they have to say. When these speakers and listeners have proficiency and fluency in the child's developing language, regardless of what language that is, they challenge the youngster to develop her abilities. When families speak their native language to their children they are generally more fluent and provide not only a more sophisticated model with full and complete grammar, but also a more complete model of language with nuances and richness.

Don't worry about not being able to talk to your child in English. Instead concentrate on **how** you are talking to her in your native language, and how you are listening to her. Talk with your child about the experiences and memories you share. Talk about what is happening as it is happening. Ask your child questions about what she sees, what she's doing, why she's doing it. Ask many questions, give her plenty of time to answer, and show interest in her responses. What is critical is that your preschooler develops concepts about how the world works and the vocabulary to express these concepts. Remember, these concepts can be developed in any language. The knowledge your child has about the world will stay with her and serve as a foundation for reading skills in English, or in any other language.

Expose Your Child to the Richness of Language

Read to your child in the language in which you are most proficient and comfortable. Talk to your child about the story you've read: ask if he liked it, his favorite part(s), his favorite illustrations. Ask him to predict what he thinks will happen next in the story before you turn the page. Help him make connections between the characters and events in the stories and the real people and events in your lives. Read, enjoy, and reflect on the stories your read together with your child. Read more than just books. Read labels, signs, menus, advertisements, and recipes. Reading is all around us, not just in books.

If you are not comfortable **reading** to your child in any language **tell** him stories - remember oral language development supports and encourages overall language and cognitive development. Get books on audiocassette tapes.

Point out all the symbols and signs your child already knows in his environment. Your preschooler is probably able to recognize more symbols than you realize. For example, most children can recognize the McDonald's big yellow "M", or the logo of their favorite breakfast cereal, or a familiar neighborhood sign.

Supporting preschoolers in becoming joyfully literate youngsters should not be left solely to school teachers. It is part of a family's responsibility to support their children's most critical life skill: reading. This will open endless doors of opportunity, and provide great rewards for the family.

Susanne Marcus, MA, TESL, is an ESL teacher with the Great Neck, Long Island, public schools, and is the ESL/LCD consultant for the NY State InterAgency Council and the NY State Early Intervention Training Consortium.

The Doctors Corner

Children's Immunizations

One of the greatest concerns shared by parents is the health and well-being of their children. Making sure that your child is properly immunized and vaccinated is one way that you can provide protection from many serious and contagious diseases.

Epidemics and Vaccines

In the 1920s, measles killed thousands of people and over 10,000 people a year died from diphtheria before the development of the vaccinations. In the 1940s and 1950s tens of thousands of children died or were left crippled by polio. Although we don't hear too much about these diseases today, children are still needlessly contracting them and are often left with serious or even fatal consequences.

While reactions to vaccines may occur, they are usually mild such as a sore arm or a fever. Serious reactions to a vaccination occur only rarely. The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that "the risks should your child get one of these dangerous childhood diseases are far greater than the risk of a serious reaction from a vaccine."

How Vaccines Work

Vaccinations work by fooling the body into thinking it has been attacked by the disease. A very small amount of the disease-causing germ is injected into the body. Although the child doesn't become ill, her body produces antibodies against that particular disease. These antibodies, whose job it is to fight against the disorder, will stay in your child's system, providing protection from future exposures to that disease.

Vaccinating Your Child

Children should begin receiving their shots either at birth or shortly thereafter. Some parents think that their children need not be immunized until they are ready to enter school but children should really have received most of their vaccinations by age two to protect them from exposure to these diseases. Fortunately, children who are behind the recommended schedule can still get vaccinated until they catch up.

It is always preferable to go to your child's pediatrician for immunizations, but your local health clinic or community health center can offer them either free, or for a minimal fee. It is important that accurate records be kept so that your child receives appropriate and adequate protection. If your child is vaccinated at a local health center, get and keep copies of the records so you'll always know what your child received and when.

Although there are some variations between states, the Center for Disease Control, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians all agree that children should receive vaccinations to protect against the following diseases:

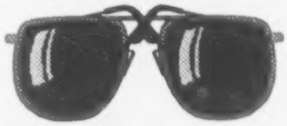
- ✦ Measles, mumps and rubella (German measles) - usually given in a combined MMR vaccine
- ✦ Polio - given either by drops or by injection
- ✦ Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough) - given as DTP or DTaP
- ✦ Hib vaccine - protects against Haemophilus influenza type b, a major cause of meningitis
- ✦ HBV given to prevent Hepatitis B which can cause serious liver damage
- ✦ Varicella (chicken pox) - now recommended for those who have not had the disease.

If you have any questions or concerns about the proper schedule, or which vaccines or combination vaccines are available, discuss them with your child's pediatrician.

Preparing Your Child for Vaccination

Some parents find it difficult to watch their children receiving shots. Although your child may experience some discomfort at the site of the injection, it will quickly pass. It is best to be honest and matter-of-fact with children before the visit to the doctor. Offer gentle reassurance that although it may hurt a bit, shots will help keep them healthy. After the injection, give lots of hugs and kisses right away and remember that good preventive health care for your child is the greatest gift of all.

Claudia Domb, RN, BA provides consulting and training to child care facilities on Long Island, New York. She is on the Medical Advisory committee for the Child Care Council of Nassau County and is a former Director of Health in Child Care for a chain of day care centers.



Watch for Coming Months

- ✱ Imponderables
- ✱ Kids and Computers
- ✱ A Parent's Voice
- ✱ Children and Worries
- ✱ Children and Loss
- ✱ Discipline

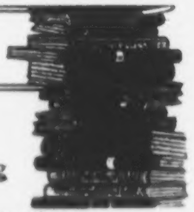
Change of Address?

Enclose your old address label along with your new address (please print) and send to:

Parent & preschooler Newsletter
North Shore Child &
Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Rd.
Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215

Fill out a "Change of Address" Mail Forwarding Order at your local post office and allow six weeks for address changes to go into effect.

Library Resources



Books With A Message

Sometimes we need to talk to our children about topics that are hard to discuss; difficult for us to bring up, and difficult for us to find the right words. Books can open the door. They can provide the opportunity and ideas and words to use. Sometimes they can simply be a way to say "I understand how you feel." This month's Library Resources provides a small sample of these materials. Your local children's librarian may have additional information and publications.

● Death:

🕮 ***A Pillow for My Mom*** by Charissa Sgouros; illustrated by Christine Ross; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. A simple yet moving story of a young girl who made a pillow for her mother. At the end, the pillow she made to comfort her mother, ends up comforting the little girl.

🕮 ***Too Far Away to Touch*** by Leslea Newman; illustrated by Catherine Stock; Clarion Books; New York, 1995; Softcover, $5.95. A little girl's Uncle Leonard is dying of AIDS. When she asks where he will go when he dies, Uncle Leonard says he will be like the stars "too far away to touch, but close enough to see." Later, when she closes her eyes she finds her memories of her uncle.

🕮 ***Tio Armando*** by Florence Parry Heide & Roxanne Heide Pierce; illustrated by Ann Grifalconi; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. When Lucitita's uncle comes to live with her and her family he provides wisdom and enriches their lives. Even after his death, his lessons remain.

🕮 ***Beautiful*** by Susi Gregg Fowler; pictures by Jim Fowler; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Softcover. Uncle George is dying, but he gives his nephew his knowledge of gardening and the tools to grow a garden of his own.

🕮 ***When Dinosaurs Die: A guide to understanding death*** by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; New York, 1996; Softcover, $5.95. This book is a straightforward child-appropriate discussion of death divided into topics. Examples are: *Why Does Someone Die?*, *Feelings About Death*, and *Ways to Remember Someone.*

● Adoption:

🕮 ***Let's Talk About it: Adoption*** by Fred Rogers; photographs by Jim Judkis; PaperStar - Putnam & Grosset Group; New York, 1998; Softcover, $5.99. A simple, yet warm, discussion of the issues arising from adoption, stressing that love and belonging are what makes a family.

🕮 ***An Mei's Strange and Wondrous Journey*** by Stephan Molnar-Fenton; illustrated by Vivienne Flesher; DK Publishing; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.95. This is a poetic first-person account of a baby's journey through the streets of China to become a little girl playing in a park.

🕮 ***A Koala for Katie: An adoption story*** by Jonathan London; illustrated by Cynthia Jabar; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1993; Softcover, $4.95. Katie is adopted and she has a lot of questions. When she sees a family of koala bears in the zoo, and gets a stuffed koala of her own to love, her parents help her understand that 'real' parents are the people who love and protect you. A gentle and loving book for little ones.

● Single Parenting Issues:

🕮 ***At Daddy's on Saturdays*** by Linda Walvoord Girard; illustration by Judith Friedman; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1987; Softcover, $5.95. It's not easy for Katie after her mother and father are divorced, but slowly she and her father build a home together and a new relationship.

🕮 ***Mommy and Me By Ourselves Again***; story and illustrations by Judith Vigna; Albert Whitman & Company: Morton Grove, IL, 1987; Hardcover. A little girl faces a birthday without Gary, the man her mother had been seeing who promised to be with her. But she is not alone, her family makes her birthday special and reminds her that they will always love her.

🕮 ***As the Crow Flies*** by Elizabeth Winthrop; illustrated by Joan Sandin; Clarion Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. Michael's parents are divorced and his dad now lives 2,000 miles away. Although they talk on the phone, they only see each other once a year when his father comes to visit. No magical happy ending, but a book about a situation which many children experience and how a father and son handle it with love.

🕮 ***Dinosaurs Divorce: A guide for changing families*** by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown; Little Brown and Company; New York, 1986; Softcover, $6.95. A well-illustrated book about the facts of divorce. It covers why parents divorce, living with one parent, telling your friends, having stepsisters and stepbrothers, and other related topics. A good book for parents and children to read together.

● Living with Grandparents:

🕮 ***Robert Lives with His Grandparents*** by Martha Whitmore Hickman; illustrated by Tim Hinton; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1995; Hardcover. When his parents divorced, Robert went to live with his grandparents. But he is embarrassed to tell people. When Parents' Day comes at school, Robert learns that he isn't the only child who lives with someone other than parents. A well-done, sensitively written book.

● Hospitalization:

🕮 ***This is a Hospital, Not a Zoo!*** by Roberta Karim; illustrated by Sue Truesdell; Clarion Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. Filbert MacFee doesn't want to be in the hospital, so he turns into a series of animals to avoid unpleasant medical procedures. A humorous book to help children cope with a hospital stay.

● Feelings and Emotions:

🕮 ***Little Feelings*** by Judy Spain Barton; Illustrated by Benjamin Hummel; Prometheus Books; Amherst, New York, 1998; Softcover. A book of poems about feelings and situations young children often experience. A non-threatening approach to understanding and accepting feelings and the situations which create them.

🕮 ***Glad Monster Sad Monster: A book about feelings*** by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda; Little Brown and Company; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. Bright pictures, and monster masks help children understand and label their emotions and the situations which elicit them.

⁂

Dear Reader

I have such wonderful memories of libraries and books. I remember my father not only reading to me, but acting out all the parts as well. When I got older and went off to the library alone, I remember dark quiet rooms filled with books on all subjects. It was like a trove of treasures.

This month Barbara Jordan tells about one of our greatest resources, the library. Libraries have changed over the years, but the one thing which remains constant is their value. All the knowledge and richness of the world is available free, complete with guides to help us find just what we need.

We're also excited about this issue for another reason. In "When English is Your Second Language", Susanne Marcus talks about ways parents can encourage their children's literacy and language.

And, finally, if you've ever faced a difficult situation with your child and needed a way to open the conversation, or provide her with information in a gentle way, you'll want to check out the Library Resources. This month we are featuring books with a message.

So, we begin a new school year focused on books and reading - what a great way to begin!

Neala Schwartzberg

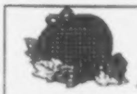
September Facts

✪ The word "September" comes from the Latin word for "seven." This seems a bit odd since September is actually the ninth month of the year. What happened? When the Romans added the months of January and February to the calendar they never changed the names of the already existing months. So, September was the seventh month, October was the eighth month and December the tenth month.

✪ September is also the month of several important events in our history.

☆ September 3, 1838: Frederick Douglas, the great orator and leader in the anti-slavery movement, escaped slavery in the south to come north to freedom.

☆ September 5, 1774: The First Continental Congress Assembly met in Philadelphia. Before the birth of our nation, this was the forerunner of the United States Congress.



EVERYTHING FOR FALL

Are you looking for a complete activity book to provide ideas and inspiration for things to do with your youngster now that the days of summer are (alas) over?

EVERYTHING FOR FALL: A complete activity book for teachers of young children; Edited by Kathy Charner, Gryphon House; Beltsville, Md.; 1997; Softcover $24.95. It's not just for teachers. Organized by month (Sept., Oct., Nov.) and type of activity (fingerplay, math, and more) the book presents a smorgasbord of things to do. From baking whole apples, paper-mache masks, and making a family tree, this book is great for teachers, but parents can and will find themselves thinking "I can do this too!"

We're Still Listening ...

The beginning of a new school year seemed like an ideal time to once again ask you, our readers, for your feedback. We've gotten so many new readers and, since we do want to be sensitive to your concerns and issues, we will enclose a Reader's Survey along with our October-1998 issue.

We hope you will take a moment to complete it and send it back to us. Please let us know what interests or concerns you and we promise to respond!

Thanks,

Sandy Wolkoff, Managing Editor

National Parent Information Network http://npin.org

The opening screen to this comprehensive site provides an array of options. You can check **What's New** which is updated monthly, or read **Parent News**, their magazine with information for parents and those working with parents.

Parents especially should check out **Parents AskERIC** -- their question answering service. This icon will also lead you to the **AskERIC Virtual Library** which, in turn, leads to even more sources of parenting and child development information.

Parenting-L Discussion List is an Internet discussion group on just about any parenting topic.

One of the other 'must see' parts of the site is the **Resources for Parents** which includes full text resources on topics ranging from child care to gifted children. Even helping children learn at home. There are also reviews and summaries of books as well as descriptions and reviews of newsletters.

Finally, there are links. Click on **Internet Resources for and about Parents**.

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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
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U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Countries Other than the USA, Canada and Mexico Add $12 Postage Per Subscription.
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp
Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 8 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* September 1998

SU BIBLIOTECA PUBLICA:

Un Tesoro en la Comunidad Para Padres y Pre-escolares

A medida que se acercan los años de escuela para los niños pequeños, uno de los principales deseos de los padres es que sus niños aprendan a leer. Uno de sus mejores aliados para crear una sólida fundación para la exitosa lectura de sus niños, no está más lejos que su biblioteca pública local.

Las bibliotecas están perdiendo su imagen de sosiego y regimentación. Más y más, están recibiendo con beneplácito a sus clientes más pequeños con un conjunto de creativos programas y actividades que involucran manipulación directa, incluyendo materiales de arte y acertijos, programas de computadoras para niños pequeños, y acceso a nuevas tecnologías. Aparte de las oportunidades que se ofrecen en la biblioteca misma, las colecciones circulantes pueden incluir videos, audiocassettes, discos compactos, combinaciones de libros y cassettes, juguetes, acertijos, programas para computadoras, y productos para CD-ROMs (discos compactos para computadoras con una amplia variedad de materias). Pero, lo que es fundamental para todos estos maravillosos recursos nuevos, es lo que las bibliotecas han estado proveyendo desde hace años -- acceso a información en abundancia -- y especialmente libros. Hay libros para, y a prueba de infantes y niños, y esos espléndidos libros con ilustraciones tan perfectos para captar la imaginación del pre-escolar.

Sumergir a nuestros pequeños niños en el lenguaje es quizás la mejor cosa que podemos hacer para prepararlos para tener éxito en la lectura. Esto significa el lenguaje en todas sus formas -- desde cantar, arrullos, y recitaciones de rimas familiares a los bebés, a nombrar los objetos y las actividades de los niños en edad de caminar, a las fascinantes conversaciones que podemos tener con los pre-escolares.

Compartir libros puede abastecer y estimular esta maravillosa inmersión en la lengua y proveer una experiencia muy especial a nuestros niños, las que recordarán aún de adultos. A los niños que se les lee frecuente y a temprana edad, y que visitan la biblioteca regularmente, vivencian temprano el regocijo de los libros y la lectura. Se familiarizan con el sentir de los libros y se sienten cómodos manejándolos, volviendo las páginas, y comenzando a leer por el principio. Aprenden que hay una conexión entre las palabras, el lenguaje y esos símbolos sobre la página, y hasta contarán la historia de libros con los que están familiarizados usando las ilustraciones como punto de partida.

Mientras les lee, estimule a sus niños a que le hagan preguntas, a repetir palabras, y a divertirse. Si son demasiado jóvenes para sentarse mientras usted lee la historia entera palabra por palabra, construya su propia versión acortada, siguiendo de cerca las ilustraciones para mantener su interés, y hágales preguntas para mantenerlos involucrados. Fomente a sus niños a nombrar los objetos o los personajes familiares en el libro, o haga que ellos le cuenten a usted la historia. Diviértase cambiando de voces según los diferentes personajes y eligiendo libros que les gusten. La cercanía y la comodidad con la palabra escrita, que ocurre tan naturalmente a través de compartir libros entre padres y niños, son los fundamentos del éxito final en la lectura.

Usando la Biblioteca

No espere para empezar el hábito de usar la biblioteca - incluso la infancia no es demasiado pronto. Usted puede compartir esos libros coloridos en cartón y sacar canciones de cuna, canciones para niños y rimas en CD (discos compactos) o cintas. Llenarán su hogar de música y refrescarán su memoria de esas rimas que son tan efectivas para introducir al nuevo bebé al lenguaje.

Consígale a sus niños sus propias tarjetas para la biblioteca lo antes posible y haga de la biblioteca una fiesta semanal que comparten juntos. La biblioteca pública es un lugar maravilloso para reunirse con otros padres y niños pequeños.

Saque cantidades de libros de manera que pueda ofrecerle a su niño una amplia variedad. Mantenga en mente que la capacidad de atención de los niños varían y la idea es divertirse leyendo juntos. Si su niño quiere pasar de un libro a otro, o cambiar de libro en medio de la historia, no haga de esto una pugna. Puede tratar de redirigir el interés de su niño haciéndole preguntas acerca de una de las ilustraciones, o relacionando la historia con sus propias experiencias. Pero si eso no funciona, es mejor dejar que su niño tome la dirección. Lo más importante es laexploración del lenguaje por parte de los niños, no el contenido de la historia, y nada se gana a través de una participación forzada.

Es común que los niños tengan libros favoritos y que le pidan repetidamente que se los lea. Esto puede tornarse un poco aburrido para usted, pero los niños nunca parecen cansarse de oír esos cuentos favoritos.
Simplemente siga introduciendo algunos libros nuevos junto con los usuales. Deje que sus niños hagan algunas de las selecciones y pídale al bibliotecario(a) sugerencias apropiadas para la edad e intereses de su niño.

Conozca a los bibliotecarios(as) de sus niños y haga que su niño también los conozca a ellos/ellas. Los bibliotecarios son profesionales entrenados que pueden ayudarlo a seleccionar libros, y mantenerlo informado de nuevos programas y servicios.

A medida que los niños crecen y necesitan ayuda con proyectos para la escuela, sus niños deberían pensar en el/la bibliotecario(a) como un adulto colaborador a quien ellos pueden recurrir.

Averigüe sobre programación para niños. Además de las horas típicas de contar cuentos, puede haber programas de arte, música, o de ciencia, espectáculos de títeres o juegos. Algunas bibliotecas hasta tienen animales regalones que viven en la Sala de los Niños; gerbils, conejos, y hámsteres, frecuentemente con nombres basados en libros para niños que son familiares. Pregunte sobre programas basados en la historia de Mamá Ganso, o Talleres para Padres y Niños, un programa lleno de diversión, basado en juegos para niños y padres o cuidadores de niños. Las bibliotecas también pueden ofrecer programas por la noche o fines de semana para atraer a los padres que trabajan.

Algunas bibliotecas proveen acceso a computadoras para los niños.
Ellos parecen aceptar la colorida e interactiva estimulación de los mejores programas para niños como "patos en el agua". Averigüe qué tiene que ofrecer su biblioteca en cuanto a tecnología y, aunque sea un novato, siéntese con su pre-escolar y haga un intento. Esos programas muy básicos para niños pequeños pueden ser precisamente lo que usted necesita para ayudarlo a sentirse cómodo con las computadoras, y es seguro que le encantarán, también.

Algunos niños lo pasan tan bien en la biblioteca, que detestan irse. Para mitigar esta transición desde la biblioteca, establezca algún tipo de rutina regular que señalice el fin de la visita - una parada en la fuente de agua al salir, una visita de despedida a los animales rellenos u otro hito de la biblioteca que ha atraído la imaginación de los niños, o dejarlos llevar sus libros al mesón de entrega. La rutina llega a ser una parte prevista de la visita y puede ayuda a mantener la salida tranquila y libre de conflictos.

Recuerde sacar una abundancia de libros y mantener su casa abastecida con una rica variedad de selecciones para su niño. La biblioteca es la mejor oferta del pueblo, por lo que puede disfrutar de estos recursos comunitarios sin quebrar su presupuesto.

Las Bibliotecas También son para los Padres

No descuide sus propias necesidades. Los departamentos de niños frecuentemente toman la delantera en servicios para padres ofreciendo grupos de apoyo, cursillos para padres, y más. Es también una gran manera para conocer otros padres, aprender sobre el cuidado de los bebés, ¡o ambas cosas! Las colecciones especiales (frecuentemente encontradas en la sala de los niños) incluyen libros, videos y revistas con información sobre el desarrollo del niño, intereses de los padres, cuestiones especiales sobre salud y temas médicos, y actividades recreativas.

Las nuevas tecnologías ponen bases de datos que antaño eran imposibles de obtener al alcance de los dedos. La Internet y la "World Wide Web" (la "web") proveen acceso instantáneo a información sobre cualquier tema imaginable. La "National Parents Information Network - (NPIN)" (Red Nacional de

Información para Padres), ubicada en la Internet (http://npin.org), es un sitio preciado, bien controlado y bien mantenido en la Internet que provee nexos a centenares de otros sitios de la Internet para padres. Muchas bibliotecas también mantienen archivos de referencia e información para ayudar a ubicar servicios locales. Su bibliotecaria(o) es su especialista en información así como también el de su niño, por lo que no dude en pedir su asistencia.

Si su biblioteca es todavía un recurso inexplorado, hágale una visita hoy. Es maravillosa, gratis, y está justo en el corazón de su comunidad. Es un lugar cómodo y seguro para que las familias pasen algún tiempo juntas y para conocer a otras familias con niños pequeños también. ¡Las bibliotecas son tesoros públicos - úselas y disfrute!

Bárbara Jordan es Directora de "Parenting and Clearinghouse Services at Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, NY" (Servicios para padres y servicio de distribución de información de la Biblioteca Pública de Middle Country en Centereach, NY). La Biblioteca Pública de Middle Country recientemente fue designada modelo nacional para el "Proyecto Lugar de la Familia," una iniciativa para promocionar servicios centrados en la familia en las bibliotecas públicas.

Cuando el Inglés es su Segunda Lengua

Criando Niños Alegremente Letrados

Usted es el primer y más importante profesor de su niño.

La lengua que usted usa con su niño es una de las herramientas más poderosas que usted tiene para enseñarle sobre el mundo; le da un sentido de identidad y de pertenencia, y le traspasa sus creencias, valores, y cultura.

Sin considerar que lengua usa con su niño -- inglés, español, farsi, chino, ilocano, criollo haitiano -- usted es el primer y más importante profesor de su niño.

Las Habilidades del Lenguaje se Transfieren de una Lengua a Otra

Usted puede ayudar a su niño a aprende a leer inglés aún cuando usted mismo no pueda leer o hablar inglés. Leer en cualquier idioma es mucho más que conectar sonidos a letras y palabras. La lectura depende de las experiencias anteriores de su niño con el mundo y su capacidad para usar el lenguaje para comunicarse, ya sea hablando o haciendo gestos.

La investigación nos muestra que los niños que llegan a ser los mejores lectores y los que hablan mejor, son esos con fuertes habilidades lingüísticas en por lo menos un idioma, sin importar cual. Cuanto mejor un niño comprende y usa un idioma como una herramienta para comunicarse y conectarse con otros, cualquiera que sea el idioma, más éxito tendrá en aprender inglés. ¿Por qué? Las habilidades se transfieren de un idioma al otro.

Una situación similar ocurre con las habilidades para leer. Los niños que entran a la escuela con capacidad para leer en su lengua materna, aún cuando su idioma sea dramáticamente diferente al inglés, desarrollan la habilidad de leer en inglés más rápido que un compañero que no tiene ninguna, o solo mínimas habilidades para leer en su lengua materna. Hay claramente algo universal con respecto a leer -- la capacidad para comprender y relacionar el significado de los símbolos sobre una página.

Hay también una fuerte conexión entre el hablar y el leer; las habilidades de lectura de los niños se construyen sobre sus habilidades para hablar. La capacidad de un niño pequeño para usar el lenguaje en una variedad de maneras tal como conseguir sus necesidades ("Más jugo") controlar el comportamiento de otros ("¡Deja eso!"), hablándole a sus amigos ("¿Todavía eres mi amigo?"), haciendo preguntas acerca del mundo a su alrededor ("¿Cómo se hace el trueno?"), e informando a otros de sus descubrimientos sobre su mundo, está conectada a su capacidad posterior para leer.

Provea Variadas Actividades Lingüísticas

Un reciente estudio nacional ha probado, una vez más, que los niños pequeños necesitan experiencias variadas con el lenguaje a fin de llegar a ser lectores exitosos. Estas experiencias incluyen canciones y cantares, jugar con palabras y sonidos, haciendo rimas, usando modelos exagerados de entonación, y jugando juegos con los dedos tales como "Ten Little Monkeys" (Diez monos pequeños) o "Round-a Bit".

Hágale notar a su niño los sonidos iniciales de los nombres: el nombre de Luis comienza igual que nombre de Lucas, como el sonido de la calle por donde caminamos, la Avenida Las Luciérnagas. Esto puede hacerse en cualquier idioma, pues todos los idiomas están compuestos de un número definido de sonidos básicos.

Háblele y Escuche a su Niño

Más que nada, los

niños pequeños necesitan verdaderas oportunidades de hablar y de ser oídos por las personas que están genuinamente interesadas en lo que ellos tienen que decir. Cuando estos habladores y los escuchantes tienen pericia y soltura en el desarrollo de la lengua del niño, sin considerar cual lengua es, ellos retan al niño a desarrollar sus capacidades. Cuando los padres le hablan su lengua nativa a sus niños, generalmente son más fluidos y les proveen no solamente un modelo más sofisticado con una gramática más completa, sino también un modelo más completo de idioma con matices y riqueza.

No se preocupe de no poder hablarle a su niño en inglés. En vez, concéntrese en como usted le habla a su niño en su lengua materna, y como lo escucha. Hable con su niño sobre las experiencias y memorias que usted tiene. Hable de lo que sucede a medida que suceda. Hágale preguntas a su niño acerca de lo que ve, lo que hace, y por qué lo hace. Hágale muchas preguntas, déle suficiente tiempo para contestar, y muestre interés en sus respuestas. Lo que es crítico es que su pre-escolar desarrolle conceptos sobre como funciona el mundo y el vocabulario para expresar esos conceptos. Recuerde, estos conceptos pueden desarrollarse en cualquier idioma. El conocimiento que su niño tiene sobre el mundo permanecerá con él o ella y le servirá como una fundación para desarrollar sus habilidades para leer en inglés, o en cualquier otra lengua.

Exponga a su Niño a la Riqueza del Lenguaje

Léale a su niño en la lengua en que usted es más experto y en la que se siente más cómodo. Hable con su niño sobre el cuento que ha leído: pregúntele si le gustó, cual fue su parte favorita, sus ilustraciones favoritas. Pídale que adivine lo que va a pasar en la historia antes de dar vuelta la página. Ayúdelo a hacer conexiones entre los personajes y los sucesos de la historia y la gente y los sucesos verdaderos en sus vidas. Lea, disfrute, y reflexione sobre las historias que lee junto con su niño. Lea más que solo libros. Lea etiquetas, señales, menús, anuncios, y recetas. La lectura está por todo nuestro alrededor, no solo en los libros.

Si usted no se siente cómodo leyéndole a su niño en ningún idioma, cuentele historias - recuerde que el desarrollo oral del lenguaje apoya y fomenta el idioma total y el desarrollo cognitivo. Consiga libros en audiocassettes.

Indique todos los símbolos y señales que su niño ya conoce en su ambiente. Su pre-escolar probablemente es capaz de reconocer más símbolos que lo que usted se ha dado cuenta. Por ejemplo, la mayoría de los niños pueden reconocer la enorme "M" amarilla de "McDonald's", o el logo de su cereal favorito del desayuno, o un signo familiar del vecindario.

Apoyar a los pre-escolares a llegar a ser niños alegremente letrados no debe dejarse solo a los profesores de la escuela. Es parte de la responsabilidad de una familia apoyar a sus niños para lograr la habilidad crítica de sus vidas – leer. Esto le abrirá interminables puertas de oportunidad a ellos, y le proveerá grandes gratificaciones a la familia.

Susanne Marcus, MA, TESL, es una profesora de Inglés como Segundo Idioma (ESL) en las escuelas públicas de Great Neck, y es consultora de ESL/LCD para el "InterAgency Council and the Early Intervention Training Consortium" (Consejo InterAgencias y Consorcio de Capacitación de Intervención Temprana). También es miembro del Consejo Administrativo de NYSTESOL.

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year – US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year – US$40
Other Countries Add $12 Postage Per Year.
Contact publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 9 *An International Resource for Professionals & Parents* October 1998

KIDS (AND ADULTS) ASK THE DARNDEST QUESTIONS

Imponderables (R)

What are *Imponderables?*(R)

They are those pesky questions we all ask and no one can answer. They are the mysteries that can't be solved by numbers, measurements, or a trip to the reference section of your library.

There are *Imponderables* (R) all around us. Here are some which children may ask, usually when you are least expecting them. Read on and be ready.

Kitchen and Food *Imponderables* (R)

Why do chickens and turkeys have white meat and dark meat?

Birds have two types of muscle fibers; red and white. Red fibers contain more of a special protein with a red pigment called myoglobin. Muscle fibers with a high amount of this protein can work longer and harder than muscles with white fibers.

Most birds have to fly long distances to migrate or find food so they need the added endurance that myoglobin provides. So, for example, a bird like a duck, that is always flying, has only dark meat. The domestic chicken or turkey, on the other hand, lives a more comfortable life. They move around by walking or running rather than flying, which is why only their legs and thighs are dark. They fly so little that their wings and breasts don't need as much of the special muscle fiber.

What's the difference between popcorn and other corn? Why can't regular corn be popped?

There are several different types of corn, but popcorn is the only variety that will pop consistently. The key to their popping ability is, amazingly, water. Each popcorn kernel contains water which is stored in a small circle of soft starch. Surrounding the soft starch is a hard enamel-like starch. When the kernel is heated for popping, the water inside begins to expand. When the water expands with such pressure that the hard starch gives way, the water bursts out, causing the popcorn kernel to explode. The soft starch pops out and the kernel turns inside out. The water, converted into steam, is released and the corn pops.

The other varieties of corn can store water, but their outer layer of starch isn't hard enough to withstand the water pressure of the expanding kernel and so nothing pops.

Why are potato chips curved?

This most popular of all snack foods was invented in 1853 by George Crum, a Native American, who was a cook at an exclusive resort in Saratoga Springs, New York. One day a guest complained that the fried potatoes that Crum had cooked were too thick. In retaliation the chef sliced potatoes paper thin and fried them. But the practical joke backfired. The potatoes soon became known as "Saratoga Chips," and the new dish became a staple at the resort.

The curl at the edges of the finished potato chip is dictated by nature. Potatoes are composed of approximately 25 percent solids and 75 percent water, but that ratio is not uniform throughout the spud. Frying is essentially a drying process with the parts of the potato with less water cooking quicker. So the edges of the slice fry faster than the middle and curl up. Curls do have their advantages: they do a wonderful job of scooping up heaping portions of onion dip.

Animal *Imponderables* (R)

Why don't birds tip over when they sleep on a telephone wire?

Most birds perch in trees (and telephone wires) and sleep without fear of falling even during extremely windy weather. The secret is their specialized tendons, or connecting muscles, that control their toes. As the bird sits on its perch, its weight stretches the tendons so that the toes move forward and lock around the perch.

Other tendons, under the toe bones, guarantee that a sleeping bird doesn't accidentally tip over. On the bottom of each of these tendons are hundreds of little projections. These fit perfectly into special sheaths like gears in a chain. The weight of the bird pressing against the perch keeps the projections tightly locked. Many other birds do not perch to sleep. They snooze on the ground or while floating on the water.

Why don't lizards get sunburned?

Look down on lizards if you want, but you must admit that they sure know how to cope with the sun better than we do. Reptiles can hang out on rocks all day and never get a burn.

Reptiles, clearly, are different. Rather than constantly shedding skin, reptiles keep the outer layer of dead cells until the next layer is ready. Moreover, a lizard's skin, both the living and dead layers, is thick and hardened, making it far more difficult for ultraviolet rays to penetrate.

As in humans, the pigment melanin also helps protect lizards from harmful rays.

Why do roosters crow in the morning?

Because there are humans around to be awakened, of course. Ornithologists (people who study the behavior of birds) don't agree with our common-sense answer. They insist that crowing "maps territory," expressing the rooster's ownership of the land, and the chickens, to any other roosters in the area. They do this in the morning because that's when birds are most active.

Why do dogs have black lips?

Dogs' lips have to be some color, and black makes more sense than most. Pigmentation helps protect animals against solar radiation damage. Because dogs don't have as much hair around their mouths as on most parts of their bodies, pigmentation plays an important role in shielding dogs against the ravages of the sun.

The gene for black pigment is also dominant over the genes for all other pigments, so the presence of black lips is attributable to hereditary factors. If the dog has the gene for black lips, that dog will have black lips.

Of course, not all dogs have black lips. Some breeds have nonpigmented lips and mouths; the Chow Chow actually has blue lips.

Other Perplexing Questions

Why doesn't glue get stuck in the bottle?

If glue is so "gluey" why doesn't it stick to the bottle? Well, there are two reasons. In order for glue to set, it must dry out. The liquid either evaporates into the air, or is absorbed into the surface to be bonded. The glue bottle, if it is capped tightly, seals in moisture.

The second reason is that different glues are made to adhere to different surfaces. The bottle doesn't provide the right surface for the glue to penetrate and bond.

Why are most pencils painted yellow?

Pencils did come in various colors before 1890, but in that year the Austrian I. & C Hardtmuth Company developed a drawing pencil that was painted yellow. Available in a range of degrees of hardness, it was introduced in 1893 at the Chicago World's Colombian Exposition and Americans responded favorably. Ever since, yellow has been synonymous with quality pencils. Even though manufacturers do make pencils painted in a wide range of colors, sales of yellow-painted pencils represent 75 percent of total sales in the United States.

How do trees, growing in urban areas that are covered with concrete, get enough water to grow?

The answer is not very well. The average life of a tree in urban environments is a sad four to seven years. One of the main problems is that trees are usually an after-thought, after the concrete has already been laid. Crews then tear out a four-by-four-foot piece of concrete, put in a 4'x 4'x 4' planter and hope for the best.

So many problems conspire against urban trees including: insufficient soil and nutrients; insufficient space for the roots to grow; insufficient water; and sometimes too much water which "drowns" the tree.

Yet with all these obstacles, some trees somehow survive often as long as 15 years or more.

And This One: for Curious Adults

How does aspirin find a headache?

When we get a minor headache, we pop two aspirins and the pain diminishes within a matter of minutes. How did those little pills find exactly what ailed us?

Willow bark, which provided the salicylic acid from which aspirin was originally made, had been used as a pain remedy ever since the Greeks discovered its power, but researchers had little idea how aspirin reduced pain until the 1970s.

Aspirin reduces the formation of a special kind of fatty acid called prostaglandin, manufactured by almost every cell in the human body. Their function seems to be to produce discomfort, inflammation, fever, and irritation in areas of the body that are not functioning normally, thus serving as an internal warning system. This discovery explains why aspirin works only on malfunctioning cells and tissues; if aspirin can stop the production of prostaglandin, pain will not be felt in the first place.

Although the answers to the **Imponderables** (R) above might have explained some of the mysteries that have confounded you, we realize that others might still torture you. If there are, feel free to write to:

feldman@imponderables.com

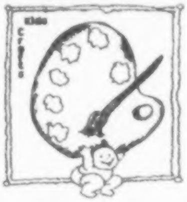
or visit:

http://www.imponderables.com,

and we'll do our best to find the answers.

David Feldman is the author nine books of Imponderables (R) and the co-creator of "Malarkey", a board game based on his books.

KID'S CRAFTS



As the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, what better way to enjoy time with our children than by making things?

Kids love to explore and discover through art. Experimenting with materials provides wonderful ways in which to have fun while learning. Indulge yourself. Pull up your sleeves and try the following Autumn crafts.

Don't forget, it's the process which is most important, not the product. Don't worry about what the project looks like. Sometimes the weirdest-looking things come to be what we treasure most!

Mask-querade

You will need: Paper bags large enough to fit over your child's head (NEVER use plastic bags); scissors, construction paper, crayons, colored pencils, and markers, non-toxic glue, decorative items such as yarn, string, bits of fabric, beans, buttons.
Using the paper bag, cut out holes for eyes and nose. Have your child use the other materials to decorate and personalize the mask. If your child does this project with friends they can put on a parade, displaying the masks for one another.

Autumn Wreath

You will need: cardboard, non-toxic glue, string, pine cones, acorns, leaves, dried grass and flowers.
Take a nature walk with your child collecting natural materials. Once home, cut the cardboard into a circular base for the materials you collected during your walk. Glue the materials onto the base making sure that there is enough glue to hold them securely. Discuss the different textures of the materials as your child works.
When the wreath is complete, carefully poke a hole through the cardboard and run a string through to make a loop. Hang your wreath and enjoy your child's handiwork throughout the Fall.

Pumpkin Faces

You will need: small pumpkins, tempera paints, black marker.
Have your child sketch faces on the small pumpkins using the black marker, then paint with the temperas. He can also use the black marker to accent the features and create ghoulish faces. Display the pumpkins for Halloween.

Leaf Critters

You will need: leaves, non-toxic glue, construction paper, crayons
Collect Fall leaves, picking those as brightly colored as possible. Have your child glue the leaves, one or two to a sheet of paper. Then, prompt your child to think up silly critters. Use the leaves as the bodies, then add faces, legs and tails. Ask your child to tell you about their invented creatures and write the story on the back of the paper. Where do the creatures live? What do they like to eat? What do they like to do? Later on, read back the stories and enjoy your child's delight.

Scribble Art

You will need: crayons or markers, rubberband, white paper.
Place a large rubberband around a handful of crayons or markers. Let your child experiment with scribbles and experience the colorful patterns created. Encourage your child to discover the many designs possible.

Dawn Marie Barhyte is a former preschool teacher and co-director of day care and Head Start centers. She is currently a freelance writer for educational and parenting publications.

Halloween Tips for Parents and Kids

Unlike other children's holidays, Halloween is a curious mix of some very unchildlike happenings. We talk about ghosts, goblins, and "monsters" and kids giggle with "shivery" fear. But it is important for parents to remember that Halloween may not be such fun for the very young child. Little ones may be very afraid of all of the graphic depictions of horror everywhere they look. Parents need to be aware of this and to expect and anticipate these fears. Be ready to talk to your preschoolers and reassure them that they are safe and that you will take care of them.

Little children need to understand that there is a real person, with a normal face, behind the scary masks and costumes. To a young child, the mask may not seem "pretend" at all. The darkness of Halloween night exaggerates fears and older children, dressed in costumes, may appear threatening. Even older siblings, in scary costumes, can frighten very young children, as they may think that the "monster" actually lives in their home. Older siblings should be encouraged to have their younger brothers and sisters help them create their costumes and assist them in dressing up.

Some general tips for Halloween are:

- *Children should not accept candy or treats from strangers.*
- *Be sure costumes fit well, that a child can see clearly, and breath freely. All fabrics should be night reflective and flame retardant.*
- *Children should never Trick or Treat alone. Parents should always accompany their children, even the older ones.*
- *If you are not comfortable with your children's Halloween plans, it is all right to say "no." Help them find other activities that are acceptable and safe. Parties, at school or at home, may be one such option.*
- *Children should be guided toward behavior that is not aggressive, destructive, wasteful, or out-of-control. Parents should clearly let children know that this kind of conduct is not acceptable.*

Parents need to provide balance, limits, protection, and care. With a little thought and pre-holiday planning, we can all enjoy the holiday - it can be "scary" and fun, yet safe for all.

DEAR READER

How often has it happened? You find yourself munching on a pencil and suddenly wonder why pencils are always yellow. Or, your youngster asks why you can't put dried regular corn in the corn popper? Or, she peers into your dog's face and asks "Why does Sam have black lips?" And you just kinda shrug because you don't have the answer. This month Dave Feldman tackles these and other puzzling questions. Finally, we will have the answers!

This month also begins our new column: Kid's Crafts. You may remember Dawn Barhyte's October-97 article on children and art. Well, she's back, and she'll be contributing special projects to create with children.

October has always meant Halloween. Let's keep our kids safe as well as happy!

Until next month ...

Neal Schwartzberg

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Math and Science

📖 ***The Amazing Pull-Out Pop-Up Body in a Book*** by David Hawcock, DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1997; Pop-up, $19.95. Imagine a complete 4½ foot body squished into a book (it's really just folded up inside). Contains child-sized pieces, information with colorful pictures, and vivid graphics.

📖 ***Big and Little*** by Margaret Miller; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. Colorful photographs explain the concept of size in clever and charming ways.

📖 ***Blast Off! A space counting book*** by Norma Cole; illustrated by Marshall Peck III; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1994; Softcover, $6.95. Combines counting to 20 with an introduction to astronomy and space travel.

📖 ***Circus Shapes*** by Stuart J. Murphy; illustrated by Edward Miller; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95. One of the series of MathStart books. This one encourages children to find the shapes in the circus and contains suggestions for further activities parents ankids can do together.

📖 ***Dealing with Addition*** by Lynette Long; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1998; Softcover, $6.95. Uses cards (not supplied with the book) to teach the concepts of color, suit and number.

📖 ***Domino Addition*** by Lynette Long; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1996; Activity pack, $14.95. The book uses the dominoes (included in the pack) to learn counting and basic addition. Instructions for playing dominoes is also included with the book. (Book is also available separately $6.95)

📖 ***Just Enough Carrots***; by Stuart J. Murphy; illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.95. Rabbit learns about comparing amounts when he goes to the supermarket with his mother. A touch of whimsy makes the book educational and fun.

📖 ***Lightning*** by Seymour Simon; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. Lightning captivates both children and adults, and this books (with vivid photographs) explains the phenomenon. It is packed with information, but younger children may need an adult to explain.

📖 ***My Baby Brother Has Ten Tiny Toes*** by Laura Leuck; illustrated by Clara Vulliamy; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL., 1997; Hardcover, $14.95. A little girl counts while she goes through her day with her baby brother.

📖 ***Numbers*** by Claire Llewellyn; illustrated by Sue Cony; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Sticker book, $8.99. Early math concepts are introduced in this interactive sticker book. Also includes activity pages and puzzles.

📖 ***The Planets in Our Solar System*** by Franklyn M. Branley; illustrated by Kevin O'Malley; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95. Describes each of the planets and other bodies in our solar system. Also contains directions for making a solar system mobile.

📖 ***Floating in Space*** by Franklyn M. Branley; illustrated by True Kelley; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95. Describes life on, and floating near, a space shuttle.
→ Both books are part of the extensive HarperCollins Let's Read and Find Out Science series.

📖 ***Rabbit and Hare Divide an Apple*** by Harriet Ziefert; illustrated by Emily Bolam; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $3.99. Rabbit and Hare have difficulty dividing an apple into two equal parts. Combines reading and division.

📖 ***Shapes: A math discovery sticker book*** illustrated by Sue Cony; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Sticker book, $8.99. Children learn shapes by adding reusable stickers to colorful scenes. Additional activities reinforce concepts.

📖 ***Very First Things to Know About Ants*** by Patricia Grossman; illustrated by John Dawson; Workman Publishing; New York; Hardcover, $8.95. A full description of the world of ants complete with stickers and activities from the American Museum of Natural History.

Halloween Books

📖 ***Haunted House: A slide-and-peek book***; Playskool Books; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1997; Boardbook, $7.99. Gives children a peek at a haunted house as they slide the cardboard sections apart to reveal the creatures inside.

📖 ***On Halloween Night***; Ferida Wolff and Dolores Kozielski; pictures by Dolores Avendano; Mulberry Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.95. Children can count their way through this slightly spooky book from one witch stirring a bubbling pot to 13 ghosts haunting the school yard.

📖 ***Boo to You, Winnie the Pooh*** adapted by Bruce Talkington; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press; New York; 1996; Hardcover, $12.95. Join Winnie the Pooh and his friends on a Halloween adventure. Trick-or-treat bag included.

📖 ***Halloween Paper Chains: A complete kit*** by Steward & Sally Walton; Tupelo Books; New York, 1997; Activity book, $7.95. Includes patterned paper and templates of bats, spiders witches and more. Contains art project ideas.

📖 ***This is the Pumpkin*** by Abby Levine; illustrated by Paige Billin-Frye; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, Il., 1997; Hardcover. Follow a family's Halloween fun from making a costume, parading through the neighborhood and then to bed.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
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Editor
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Contributors:
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Illustrations
Susan Eaddy
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1998; North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center; Printed in the United States of America.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
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NEWSLETTER
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
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En Español

Volume 13, Number 9 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* October 1998

LOS NIÑOS (Y LOS ADULTOS) PREGUNTAN LAS COSAS MÁS INCREÍBLES

Imponderables (R)

* ¿Qué son los Imponderables?(R)

Son esas fastidiosas preguntas que todos hacemos y que nadie puede contestar. Son los misterios que no pueden se resueltos por números, medidas, o por un viaje a la sección de referencia de su biblioteca.

Hay Imponderables (R) a todo nuestro alrededor. A continuación anotamos algunos que los niños pueden preguntar, por lo general cuando usted menos lo espera. Léalo y prepárese.

Los Imponderables (R) de la Cocina y las Comidas

* ¿Por qué los pollos y los pavos tienen carne blanca y carne roja?

Las aves tienen dos tipos de fibras musculares; roja y blanca. Las fibras rojas contienen más de una proteína especial, llamada mioglobina, que tiene una pigmentación roja. Las

volando, lo que explica por qué solo sus piernas y muslos son obscuros. Ellos vuelan tan poco que sus alas y pechos no necesitan mucho de aquella fibra muscular especial.

* ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre las cabritas de maíz (popcorn) y los otros maíces?
* ¿Por qué el maíz regular no puede estallar?

Hay varios diferentes tipos de maíz, pero las cabritas de maíz son la única variedad que explota consistentemente. La clave es, increíblemente, agua. Cada núcleo de cabritas de maíz contienen agua, la que está almacenada en una pequeña esfera de almidón mullido. Rodeando el almidón mullido hay un almidón duro como el esmalte. Cuando el núcleo se calienta, el agua adentro comienza a expandirse. El agua se expande con tal presión que el almidón duro cede, y el agua salta hacia afuera, haciendo que el núcleo del maíz estalle. Cuando el almidón mullido estalla, voltea el núcleo de maíz al revés. El agua, convertida en vapor, queda libre y el maíz se convierte en "cabrita".

Las otras variedades de maíz pueden almacenar agua, pero su capa exterior de almidón no es suficientemente dura como para resistir la presión del agua mientras se dilata el núcleo, y por lo tanto, nada explota.

* ¿Por qué son rizadas las "papitas fritas"?

El rizado de los bordes de la papa frita está dictado por la naturaleza. Las papas están compuestas de aproximadamente un 25 por ciento de sólidos y un 75 por ciento de agua, pero esta relación no es uniforme a lo largo y ancho de la papa. Freír es esencialmente un proceso de "secado" en el que las partes de la papa con menos agua se cocinan más rápido. Por lo que los bordes de la tajada se fríen más rápido que el medio, y se enroscan. Los rizos tienen sus ventajas: hacen un trabajo maravilloso para apilar grandes porciones de salsas y condimentos.

Imponderables (R) de origen animal

* ¿Por qué las aves no se caen cuando se duermen sobre un cable de teléfono?

La mayoría de las aves se posan en árboles (y cables de teléfono) y duermen sin miedo a caerse aún cuando hay mucho viento. El secreto está en sus tendones especializados, o músculos conectantes, que controlan los dedos de sus pies. Al posarse el ave en una percha, su peso estira los tendones de modo que los dedos del pie se mueven hacia adelante y se cierran alrededor de la percha.

Otros tendones, debajo de los huesos de los dedos del pie, garantizan que un ave durmiendo no se caiga accidentalmente. En el fondo de cada uno de estos tendones hay centenares de pequeñas proyecciones. Estas se amoldan perfectamente en fundas especiales como los engranajes de una cadena. El peso del ave presionando contra la percha mantiene las proyecciones fuertemente cerradas. Muchas otras aves no se posan en ramas para dormir. Duermen sobre la

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Hay Imponderables (R) a todo nuestro alrededor. A continuación anotamos algunos que los niños pueden preguntar, por lo general cuando usted menos lo espera. Léalo y prepárese.

Los Imponderables (R) de la Cocina y las Comidas

* ¿Por qué los pollos y los pavos tienen carne blanca y carne roja?

Las aves tienen dos tipos de fibras musculares; roja y blanca. Las fibras rojas contienen más de una proteína especial, llamada mioglobina, que tiene una pigmentación roja. Las fibras musculares con una alta cantidad de esta proteína pueden trabajar más duro y por más tiempo que los músculos con fibras blancas.

La mayoría de las aves tienen que volar grandes distancias para emigrar o encontrar alimento, por lo que necesitan la mayor resistencia que provee la mioglobina. De esta manera, por ejemplo, un ave como un pato silvestre, que está siempre volando, tiene solo carne roja. El pavo o el pollo doméstico, por otra parte, viven una vida más cómoda. Se mueven alrededor caminando o corriendo, más bien que volando, lo que explica por qué solo sus piernas y muslos son obscuros. Ellos vuelan tan poco que sus alas y pechos no necesitan mucho de aquella fibra muscular especial.

* ¿Cuál es la diferencia entre las cabritas de maíz (popcorn) y los otros maíces?
* ¿Por qué el maíz regular no puede estallar?

Hay varios diferentes tipos de maíz, pero las cabritas de maíz son la única variedad que explota consistentemente. La clave es, increíblemente, agua. Cada núcleo de cabritas de maíz contienen agua, la que está almacenada en una pequeña esfera de almidón mullido. Rodeando el almidón mullido hay un almidón duro como el esmalte. Cuando el núcleo se calienta, el agua adentro comienza a expandirse. El agua se expande con tal presión que el almidón duro cede, y el agua salta hacia afuera, haciendo que el núcleo del maíz estalle. Cuando el almidón mullido estalla, voltea el núcleo de maíz al revés. El agua, convertida en vapor, queda libre y el maíz se convierte en "cabrita".

Las otras variedades de maíz pueden almacenar agua, pero su capa exterior de almidón no es suficientemente dura como para resistir la presión del agua mientras se dilata el núcleo, y por lo tanto, nada explota.

* ¿Por qué son rizadas las "papitas fritas"?

Este, el más popular de todos los alimentos "rápidos", fue inventado en 1853 por George Crum, un indio nativo estadounidense, que era cocinero en un hotel de vacaciones privado en Saratoga Springs, en el estado de Nueva York. Un día un invitado se quejó que las patatas fritas que Crum había cocinado eran demasiado gruesas. En represalia, el cocinero cortó las patatas delgadas como el papel y las frió. Pero la broma práctica no tuvo el efecto deseado. Las papas pronto llegaron a ser conocidas como "Saratoga Chips," y el nuevo plato llegó a ser uno de los artículos alimenticios principales del hotel.

El rizado de los bordes de la papa frita está dictado por la naturaleza. Las papas están compuestas de aproximadamente un 25 por ciento de sólidos y un 75 por ciento de agua, pero esta relación no es uniforme a lo largo y ancho de la papa. Freír es esencialmente un proceso de "secado" en el que las partes de la papa con menos agua se cocinan más rápido. Por lo que los bordes de la tajada se fríen más rápido que el medio, y se enroscan. Los rizos tienen sus ventajas: hacen un trabajo maravilloso para apilar grandes porciones de salsas y condimentos.

Imponderables (R) de origen animal

* ¿Por qué las aves no se caen cuando se duermen sobre un cable de teléfono?

La mayoría de las aves se posan en árboles (y cables de teléfono) y duermen sin miedo a caerse aún cuando hay mucho viento. El secreto está en sus tendones especializados, o músculos conectantes, que controlan los dedos de sus pies. Al posarse el ave en una percha, su peso estira los tendones de modo que los dedos del pie se mueven hacia adelante y se cierran alrededor de la percha.

Otros tendones, debajo de los huesos de los dedos del pie, garantizan que un ave durmiendo no se caiga accidentalmente. En el fondo de cada uno de estos tendones hay centenares de pequeñas proyecciones. Estas se amoldan perfectamente en fundas especiales como los engranajes de una cadena. El peso del ave presionando contra la percha mantiene las proyecciones fuertemente cerradas. Muchas otras aves no se posan en ramas para dormir. Duermen sobre la tierra o mientras flotan sobre el agua.

* ¿Por qué no se queman las lagartijas con el sol?

Usted puede menospreciar a las lagartijas si quiere, pero debe admitir que saben como lidiar con el sol mejor que nosotros. Los reptiles pueden quedarse sobre las rocas todo el día y nunca se tuestan con el sol.

Los reptiles, claramente, son diferentes. En vez de cambiar constantemente de piel, los reptiles guardan la capa exterior de células muertas hasta que la próxima capa de

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piel está lista. Además, la piel de un lagarto, tanto las capas vivas como las capas muertas, es gruesa y endurecida, haciendo mucho más difícil que penetren los rayos ultravioletas.

Igual que en los humanos, el pigmento melanina ayuda a los lagartos a protegerse de los rayos nocivos.

* ¿Por qué cantan los gallos en la mañana?

Porque hay seres humanos que despertar, por supuesto. Los ornitólogos (gente que estudia el comportamiento de las aves) no están de acuerdo con nuestra respuesta de aparente sentido común. Ellos insisten en que el canto es una manera de "establecer territorio", expresando la titularidad del gallo sobre su tierra, y sobre las gallinas, ante cualquier otro gallo en el área. Hacen esto en la mañana porque es cuando las aves son más activas.

* ¿Por qué los perros tienen labios negros?

Los labios de los perros tienen que ser de algún color, y el negro hace más sentido que la mayoría de los colores. La pigmentación ayuda a proteger a los animales contra el daño de la radiación solar. Debido a que los perros no tienen mucho pelo alrededor de sus bocas, a diferencia de la mayor parte de sus cuerpos, la pigmentación juega un papel importante en protegerlos contra los daños del sol.

Además, el gen del pigmento negro es dominante sobre los genes de todos los otros pigmentos, por lo que la presencia de labios negros también es

funcione, debe secarse. El líquido o se evapora en el aire, o se absorbe en la superficie a pegar. La botella de goma, si se cierra firmemente, sella la humedad adentro.

La segunda razón es que se hacen diferentes gomas para adherir a diferentes superficies. La botella no provee la superficie correcta para que la goma penetre y se pegue.

* ¿Por qué la mayoría de los lápices son pintados de amarillo?

Antes de 1890, los lápices venían en diversos colores, pero ese año la compañía austríaca L & C Hardtmuth desarrolló un lápiz de dibujo que pintó de amarillo. Disponible en una gama de grados de dureza, fue introducido en 1893 en la Exposición Mundial y Columbiana de Chicago, siendo bien acogido por los estadounidenses. Desde entonces, el amarillo ha sido sinónimo con la buena calidad de los lápices. Si bien los fabricantes hacen lápices pintados en una amplia gama de colores, las ventas de lápices pintados de amarillo representan el 75 por ciento de ventas totales en los Estados Unidos.

* ¿Como se las arreglan los árboles, creciendo en áreas urbanas en medio del concreto, para conseguir suficiente agua para crecer?

La respuesta es que no muy bien. La vida promedio de un árbol en ambientes urbanos es de unos tristes cuatro a siete años. Uno de los problemas principales es que comúnmente se piensa en los árboles después que el concreto ya ha sido colocado. Los trabajadores entonces hacen un hoyo de 1,3 x 1,3 x 1,3 metros en el concreto, ponen un árbol y ruegan que fructifique.

Muchos trabas complotan contra los árboles urbanos, incluyendo: insuficiente tierra y alimento; falta de espacio para que las raíces crezcan; carencia de agua; y a veces demasiada agua, lo que "ahoga" al árbol.

Aún con todo estos obstáculos, algunos árboles de algún modo sobreviven frecuentemente hasta 15 años o más.

Y este es para adultos curiosos.

dolor hasta la década de los años 70.

La aspirina reduce la formación de un tipo especial de ácido graso llamado prostaglandina, fabricado por casi todas las células del cuerpo humano. Su función parece ser producir malestar, inflamación, fiebre, e irritación en áreas del cuerpo que no funcionan normalmente, sirviendo así como un sistema de advertencia interno. Este descubrimiento explica por qué la aspirina funciona solo sobre tejidos y células que funcionan mal; si la aspirina puede parar o reducir la producción de prostaglandina, no se sentirá dolor.

Aunque las respuestas a los Imponderables (R) de más arriba, pueden explicar algunos de los misterios que pueden haberlo confundido, nos damos cuenta que hay otros que todavía pueden atormentarlo. Si es así, siéntase libre para escribirnos a:

feldman@imponderables.com

o visite:

http://www.imponderables.com

y haremos lo que más podamos para encontrar las respuestas.

David Feldman es autor de nueve libros de Imponderables (R) y el co-creador de "Malarkey", un juego basado en sus libros.

Translated By:
Tikal Translations
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NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
Sandra Wolkoff, CSW
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Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.
Layout and Design
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter

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Además, el gen del pigmento negro es dominante sobre los genes de todos los otros pigmentos, por lo que la presencia de labios negros también es atribuible a factores hereditarios. Si un perro tiene el gen de labios negros, ese perro tendrá labios negros.

Por supuesto, no todos los perros tienen labios negros. Algunas crías tienen labios y bocas sin pigmentos; de hecho, el perro "Chow Chow" tiene labios azules.

Otras Preguntas Pasmosas

* ¿Por qué la goma de pegar no se pega en la botella?

Si la goma es tan "gomosa" ¿por qué no se pega a la botella? Pues bien, hay dos razones. Para que la goma

* ¿Por que la mayoria de los lápices son pintados de amarillo?

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* ¿Como hace la aspirina para encontrar un dolor de cabeza?

Cuando nos da un dolor de cabeza menor, nos tomamos dos aspirinas y el dolor disminuye dentro de unos minutos. ¿Cómo encontraron esas pequeñas píldoras exactamente lo que nos afligía?

La corteza de sauce, que proveyó el ácido salicílico del que se hizo originalmente la aspirina, había sido usada como un remedio contra el dolor desde que los griegos descubrieron su poder. Pero los investigadores no tenían mucha idea de como la aspirina reduce el

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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send payment, payable to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S.A., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
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NEWSLETTER
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November 1998

WHEN KIDS WORRY - HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- *Jake, three-and-a-half-years-old, has been sucking his thumb constantly during the past week. His parents don't understand why. They thought he had outgrown that habit a long time ago. They begin to wonder if the thumb sucking and some very irritable behavior might be related to Jake starting a new nursery school. In fact, Jake is feeling stressed because of the pressure of starting a new school, as well as being abruptly separated from his parents.*
- *Percy has just lost his job. Although Liz works as a nurse, her salary is barely enough to cover their living expenses, so she has agreed to work the night shift in order to increase their income. For four-year-old Cherise, life has become very hectic. She sees less of her mom, and more of her dad, but he has become very grumpy. Cherise's teacher reports that she is quick to cry at the least provocation and has been hitting other children at the preschool as well as becoming defiant at home.*

While we often think of adults as having pressures and anxiety, we rarely associate these with children. But today's children are faced with more than the traditional pressures. Children seem to face greater academic, school, and extracurricular pressures. In addition, there may be changes going on within a family that can challenge parents' ability to provide nurturing and stability.

What are the causes of anxiety in young children?

The normal stresses of growing up can be found everywhere, even in the achievement of typical milestones such as weaning, learning to walk, leaving the crib, using the toilet, separating from parents, as well as in learning to play with others, building a vocabulary, and learning right from wrong. However, the pressure some parents feel to do it all and have it all filters down to their children. It is not hard to understand how the mobility and fast-paced life of today's families tend to compound the traditional stresses for children. They too become pressured to do more and achieve more, and achieve it sooner.

Stir in parents coping with any additional stresses (e.g. economic problems, job insecurity, medical problems, frail parents) and it can become harder for them to be warm, patient and nurturing. In families going through divorce, toddlers and pre-schoolers may feel responsible for their parents' break-up and worry that parents who stop loving each other may stop loving them. The result is that kids' anxiety levels begin to rise.

So, let's look more carefully at some common sources of pressure and worry for kids, and what parents can do to help.

✧ ***Child care and school can stress children.***

Beginning child care or school necessitates living by a schedule, adapting to different child care providers or teachers as well as getting along in a group situation. If the group is too large, or the adult:child ratio insufficient, young children do not get the individual attention they need. Misguided attempts to teach reading and writing skills at early ages also places unnecessary pressure on young children for achievements which will take place more naturally and easily later on.

✧ ***Parent expectations***

Parents sometimes have expectations for their children which exceed their youngsters' abilities. Parents often expect them to be great at sharing, even at age two, or be "team players" as preschoolers. Such expectations are unrealistic, and when the children can not meet these standards both parent and child are frustrated and upset.

Parents often forget that young children have difficulty sitting still and being quiet. Expecting exemplary behavior in grown-up situations (e.g. museums, fine restaurants, doctors' waiting rooms, airplanes) without providing appropriate diversions leads to disappointment and a child labeled as "bad."

◇ ***The birth of a sibling***

This is often a major cause of anxiety among children. With care and support from parents, this type of stress can be a mobilizer, encouraging a child to become more independent, to cooperate and to become more empathic. But in less sensitive situations where youngsters are not assisted in overcoming the rivalry, this stress can have unhealthy, on-going consequences (See: *When Push Comes to Shove: Understanding and Reducing Sibling Rivalry*, February, 1997).

◇ ***Excessive television viewing***

From violent cartoons to repetitive news reports of natural disasters and violence, children are exposed to scary and inappropriate content on a regular basis. Violent computer games and videos compound the problem.

Because of their still rudimentary concepts of time and space, young children cannot understand that hurricanes, earthquakes, fires, murders or kidnappings are rare events and generally not happening around the corner. Repeated doses of violence, especially real life violence on the news, undermine a child's belief in the safety of his or her immediate environment. Aside from anxiety about personal safety and TV-inspired nightmares, there is also the risk of children developing adult-style cynicism about their world, believing that all people are bad or untrustworthy, or that the world is an unsafe place (See *Spellbound: Is Television Seducing Our Kids?*, April, 1997).

◇ ***Problems experienced by parents also affect children.***

Many children encounter the ripples of adult problems. Whether insecurity resulting from the loss of a job, demoralization of a divorce, or anxiety over a sick relative, parents' problems often distract them from their children's needs. Changes in routine, diminished attention, reduced nurturing, and a home environment fraught with tension have a negative impact on children.

◇ ***Too much of a good thing***

Last, but certainly not least, on the list of anxiety producing factors is the current trend to enroll children in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. The result is often too much scheduled activity and too little time to reflect, play and relax.

What are the symptoms of anxiety in young children?
Just as three-and-a-half-year-old Jake regressed to thumb sucking and irritable behavior, and Cherise began to cry, hit other children, and become disobedient, many youngsters exhibit their feelings of stress in behavior which is typically associated with earlier years (such as bed wetting after successful training, and thumbsucking). Others may display erratic behavior, sleep problems, and temper tantrums as well as crying, clinging, and whining. While most children will manifest one or more of these behaviors on any given day, a chronically stressed child will exhibit more of them and more frequently. They may also show symptoms generally associated with stress in adults such as digestive problems, aches and pains, rashes and skin problems.

What can parents do? Can they "worry proof" their children?
Numerous books have been written on the topic of stress and anxiety in young children, some of which suggest it is possible to protect children from all anxiety. This is not a realistic goal. Children, like their parents, will always be faced with stresses and strains of life that arise from both positive and negative situations. In addition, youngsters must cope with daily demands, altered schedules and relinquishing comfortable routines. Finally, of course, there are unexpected traumas which produce stress in families such as job loss, illness, and moving.

Protecting children from all of these strains would be both impossible and undesirable. It would deny them the opportunity to develop the critical coping techniques needed to survive adult life. However, there are several things parents can do to insure the stresses are kept within a child's ability to cope, or help a child develop better coping skills.

◇ ***Encourage your youngster in age-appropriate achievements.***

Learning to dress, sort blocks, and put puzzle pieces together gives youngsters a sense of competence and a belief in themselves which forms the bedrock for later resilience.

◇ ***Work together with your youngster to solve daily problems, teaching her how to think them through and encouraging her to continue in the face of adversity.***

Instead of running upstairs to help a child carry her books and toys, suggest that she find a way to get them down. If she finds a bag to transport them, praise her for being a "good thinker" rather than a "good girl." Instead of putting puzzle pieces together for your three-year-old, suggest ways of approaching the puzzle: "First look for the corners, then the edges, then all the pieces of the same color."

If your child is having difficulty sharing his toy, acknowledge that "Sometimes it's hard to share, but I know you will give your friend a turn in a little while when you are ready." Such messages indicate that you have faith in your child and in his ability to persevere under adversity.

◇ ***Help your child learn to deal with frustration and disappointment, preferably in small, age-appropriate doses.***

Parents must put their children's disappointments into perspective. If the promised zoo trip has to be cancelled, or the desired ice cream flavor is unavailable, it is best not to over dramatize the disappointment. Acknowledge it, certainly, but reassure your child that there will be another time, and that there are other choices. Such reassurance will help your child put things into perspective as well.

◇ ***Have realistic expectations.***

No child can be perfect, or be the best at everything. As a society, we seem to be expecting too much competence in children. Some knowledge of child development is important so that parents know what can be expected at certain ages and how to relate to children of different temperaments.

◇ ***Make careful choices in child care or school.***

Parents must fully trust the child care provider or program. Continuity of care should be a goal. Moving children in and out of centers and schools is very disruptive. Children need stability in their lives in order for them to concentrate on mastering new skills, and developing social relationships.

◇ ***Simplify life.***

Extra activities should be evaluated and reduced if necessary. Ask yourself if this activity is something your child enjoys and wants to do, or if this is something you want her to do. Slow the pace. Leave plenty of time and space for just plain playing because this is how children learn best.

✧ ***Love your children unconditionally for who they are rather than for what they can achieve.***

Don't compare your child to others.

✧ ***Deal constructively with the issues and problems in your life.***

Be aware that parenting doesn't take place in a vacuum. Parents who are under stress often become more critical and less nurturing and patient.

It is a parent's responsibility to keep children safe and to find a balance between challenge or minor frustration and overly stressful conditions. Finding this balance is an art rather than a science. Every child is unique, and parents need to tailor their approach to each child based upon age and personality.

Toni H. Liebman, MS has over 30 years experience as a Specialist in Early Childhood Education and Parent Education.

New Health Insurance Programs for Kids

A new children's health insurance program has been created by the Federal government as part of the Balanced Budget Act of August 1997. The Federal government now provides matching funds to encourage States to begin or expand health insurance to children who are under 19 years of age.

If your child is among the millions of children not covered by health insurance contact:
Health Care Financing Administration; Lillian Gibbons 410-786-8705;
(www.hcfa.gov/init/children.htm) or
Health Resources & Services Administration; Marcia Brand (301) 443-4619;
(www.hrsa.dhhs.gov/childhealth)

DEAR READER

I wish I had $1 for every time when I was growing up that someone told me "You're a kid, what do you have to worry about?"

It's true, kids don't have the same concerns as adults. So, I confess, I'm often tempted to tell my son "You think you have it hard?" when something negative happens in my life. But I keep silent (sometimes with great difficulty). The fact is that in addition to grappling with their own issues, all too often our children have to handle the fall-out from the events which happen to us. Death, divorce, illness, financial uncertainty happen to us, but also affect them. And both children and adults fret about their ability to meet the demands placed upon them. When those demands exceed our ability to cope, we become anxious. And it doesn't matter what our age.

It isn't easy to be a kid, so in this month's feature Toni Liebman talks about the very real pressures in our children's lives and how we can help them develop the skills to cope.

November is the month of my very favorite holiday. I love Thanksgiving: the food; getting together with family and friends; celebrating the good things in our lives.

In addition to her delicious recipes, Amy Houts writes of a wonderful Thanksgiving legend which could become a new family tradition.

Happy Thanksgiving
to you all.

Preschooler in the Kitchen PLUS

Gifts to "Thank You!"

Come, ye thankful people come,
Raise the song of harvest-home,
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin.

So begins my favorite childhood Thanksgiving song written by Henry Alford in 1844. There are many ways to say "thank you." Expressing your thanks with a gift of food is fun for the giver and welcomed by the receiver. How precious to make gifts with loving hands: little hands and big hands working together for a common goal.

This Thanksgiving take some time to make one of the following recipes with your preschooler. These foods are perfect for packing in the mail, bringing to a special day-care provider, or a caring neighbor: anyone to whom you want to say "thank you!"

Gingerbread Cookies
1/3 cup butter or margarine
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 egg, slightly beaten
1/2 cup dark molasses
2 1/2 cups sifted flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Cream butter and sugar together with wooden spoon if the children are helping, or an electric mixer (adults only). Stir in the beaten egg and molasses. Sift and measure the flour then sift flour and spices together over a large bowl (to prevent a mess) and add to batter. Roll out dough on a floured board or cloth to 1/4 inch thickness. Preschoolers can help cut shapes with a cookie cutter. Transfer to a greased baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Yield: about 3 dozen cookies.

Pumpkin Bars
1 cup vegetable oil
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
16-oz can pumpkin or two cups home-cooked pumpkin
2 cups flour
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9 by 13-inch pan. Pour oil and sugar into a large bowl. Add eggs to oil mixture. Stir in pumpkin. In another bowl preschoolers can help measure and stir together: flour, cinnamon, salt, baking soda, and baking powder. Add to pumpkin mixture. Pour into pan. Back 30 - 35 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool. Preschoolers can help sift confectioner's sugar on top. Cut into bars. Yield: 28 bars.

The Legend of the Five Kernels

Have you ever heard of this legend? The legend is about the Pilgrims. The first winter the Pilgrims almost starved. They did not have enough food and they had to split it between many people. According to the legend, some days they ate only five kernels of corn. But the spring came and the Pilgrims planted, hunted, and fished. The next winter there was more food, but they always put five kernels of corn on the table to remind them of how much they had.

Each kernel can remind us of one thing for which to be thankful. You can ask your preschooler for what she is thankful and decide together what each kernel represents. Enclose these reminders, either hand-written or typed, in a bag, along with five popcorn kernels and send to a friend.

➢ Here are the reminders my friend wrote to me:

- The first kernel reminds us of the beauty of autumn.
- The second kernel reminds us of the love in our family.
- The third kernel reminds us of God's love.
- The fourth kernel reminds us of our friendships.
- The fifth kernel reminds us of freedom.

This is an easy, yet meaningful project for you and your preschooler.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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Library Resources

Imagination and Whimsy

Christina Katerina & the Box by Patricia Lee Gauch; illustrated by Doris Burn; Paper Star Books; New York; 1998; Softcover, $5.99. To an adult, it was just a big empty box, but to Christina and her friend it was so much more. With a bit of imagination it became a castle, clubhouse, a racing car, and more.

Cows in the Kitchen by June Crebbin; illustrated by Katharine McEwen; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. Tom Farmer is sleeping in the haystacks and the animals have taken over the house. With animal sounds and alliteration this is a fun read-along book.

The Dancing Man by Ruth Lercher Bornstein; Clarion Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. One day a young boy meets an old man who gives him a pair of silver dancing shoes. When he has grown up, the shoes fit and he begins to dance. He dances his way across the town and the villages and the years of his life, until he meets another boy who will wear those shoes again and dance.

Edward the Emu by Sheena Knowles; illustrated by Rod Clement; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Softcover, $6.95. Told in rhyme, this is the story of Edward who isn't at all happy to be an emu. But after he tries to become each of the other animals in the zoo, he discovers that being himself is best.

George Shrinks by William Joyce; HarperFestival; New York, 1998; Boardbook, $6.95. What would life be like if you were tiny – really tiny? One day George finds out. The illustrations make the book fun to share with your child.

Hiding by Dorothy Aldis; illustrated by Heather Collins; Puffin Books; New York, 1996; Softcover, $4.99. Benny is hiding all over the house, at least in his imagination. Based on a delightful poem with clever illustrations.

If You Give a Pig a Pancake by Laura Numeroff; illustrated by Felicia Bond; A Laura Geringer Book (HarperCollins); New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. Another in the series of "If You Give a ..." and just as funny and imaginative. From needing maple syrup for the pancake, to building and decorating a tree house, the result is chaos and whimsy.

Letter to the Lake by Susan Marie Swanson; illustrations by Peter Catalanotto; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.95. It's winter and cold. As Rosie gets ready for school, she writes a letter in her mind to the lake where she spent the summer. The text paints word pictures as Rosie lives in the present, remembers her past, and imagines her future at the lake.

The Old Woman and the Wave by Shelley Jackson; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.95. Can you imagine what it would be like to live under a wave? One old lady did, and didn't like it at all. Until one day she discovered that the wave could take her on a journey of a lifetime.

Thanksgiving Books

The First Thanksgiving Feast by Joan Anderson; photographs by George Ancona; Clarion Books; New York, 1984; Softcover, $5.95. A re-creation of the first Thanksgiving feast through pictures taken at Plimoth Plantation and dialogue based on first-hand accounts of the original feast. It is a unique depiction of the lives and experiences of early settlers suitable for grade-schoolers.

The Thanksgiving Monster by Alison Inches; illustrated by Richard Brown; Puffin Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, lift-the-flap, $5.99. Their Thanksgiving dinner has been stolen, but the muppets find they can still be thankful.

Thanksgiving by Miriam Nerlove; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1990; Softcover, $4.95. As a family sits down to a Thanksgiving dinner, they remember the first Thanksgiving. A good introduction, for little ones, to the history of the holiday.

Bonus.com

(www.bonus.com)

Good websites for kids, especially young kids, are hard to find. But here's one which is not only good, it is one of the best. And best of all, it's free.

With the holidays coming, Bonus.com has added special theme activities in addition to their over 1700 things to do and explore.

Is it safe? Yes, it is. Bonus.com has created its own protected environment. Once children enter Bonus.com, they can't surf the net or follow inappropriate links. Every activity has been selected to be interesting, entertaining and safe. Activities are also age-graded so that youngsters (and parents) can find the ones most appropriate.

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
11 Issues per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
Copyright 1998 The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

En Español

Volume 13, Number 10 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* November 1998

CUANDO LOS NIÑOS ANDAN PREOCUPADOS COMO PUEDEN AYUDAR LOS PADRES

Jake, un niño de tres años y medio, ha estado chupándose el dedo constantemente durante toda la semana. Sus padres no comprenden por qué. Pensaban que él había dejado ese hábito hacía mucho tiempo, y comienzan a preguntarse si chuparse el dedo además de tener un comportamiento muy irritable, pueden estar relacionados con el hecho de que Jake va a comenzar a ir a una nueva escuela de párvulos. De hecho, Jake se siente estresado a causa de la presión de comenzar una nueva escuela, así como también el verse abruptamente separado de sus padres.

Percy acaba de perder su trabajo. Y aunque Liz trabaja como enfermera, su sueldo apenas alcanza para cubrir los gastos de la familia, por lo que ha decidido trabajar el turno de noche para aumentar sus ingresos. Para Cherise, una niña de cuatro años, la vida se ha puesto muy agitada. Ve menos a su mamá, y más a su papá, pero él se ha puesto muy malhumorado. La profesora de Cherise informa que ella llora a la menor provocación, y que ha golpeado a otros niños en la escuela pre-escolar. Además en la casa ella se ha puesto desafiante.

Mientras frecuentemente pensamos que los adultos tienen presiones e inquietudes, rara vez asociamos estas con los niños. Pero los niños de hoy encaran más que las presiones tradicionales. Hoy parecen encarar mayores presiones académicas en la escuela, y también en actividades extracurriculares. Aparte de esto pueden haber cambios dentro de una familia, lo que puede poner a prueba la capacidad de los padres para proveer un ambiente estable y sustentador.

¿Cuales son las causas de la ansiedad en los niños pequeños? Las tensiones normales de crecer pueden encontrarse en todos lados, incluso en el logro de hitos típicos, tal como el destete, aprender a caminar, dejar la cuna, usar el servicio higiénico, separarse de los padres, así como también al aprender a jugar con otros niños, construir un vocabulario, y aprender a distinguir el bien del mal. Sin embargo, la presión que algunos padres sienten por hacerlo todo y tenerlo todo, se filtra hacia abajo a los niños. No es difícil comprender como la movilidad y la vida a alta velocidad de las familias de hoy tienden a aumentar las tensiones tradicionales de los niños. Ellos también se sienten presionados a hacer más y lograr más, y lograrlo más pronto.

Agréguese a esto, padres lidiando con cualquier tensión adicional (p.ej. problemas económicos, inseguridad en el trabajo, problemas médicos, o padres con enfermedades), y se hace más difícil para los padres ser cálidos, pacientes y sustentadores. En las familias de solo un padre o madre, los niños pequeños y los pre-escolares frecuentemente pueden sentirse responsables de la ruptura matrimonial, y se preocupan de que sus padres, al dejar de amarse el uno al otro, puedan dejar de quererlos a ellos también. El resultado es que los niveles de ansiedad de los niños comienzan a subir. Por esto debemos mirar más cuidadosamente algunas fuentes comunes de presión y preocupación para los niños, y pensar en qué pueden hacer los padres para ayudar.

*** La escuela pre-escolar y la escuela regular pueden estresar a los niños.**
Empezar a ir a la escuela pre-escolar o a la escuela regular, implica vivir de acuerdo a un horario, adaptarse a diferentes profesores o proveedores de cuidado, así como también llevarse bien en una situación de grupo. Si el grupo es demasiado grande, o si el número de adultos versus niños es insuficiente, los niños pequeños no logran la atención individual que necesitan. Intentos mal encaminados por enseñar a leer y escribir a edades tempranas, también ponen presión innecesaria sobre los niños pequeños para obtener logros que tendrán lugar con más naturalidad y facilidad más adelante.

*** Las expectativas de los padres**
A veces los padres tienen expectativas para sus niños que exceden sus capacidades. Los padres frecuentemente esperan que los niños se comporten admirablemente al compartir, incluso a los dos años, o que sean "jugadores de equipo" como pre-escolares. Tales expectativas son irreales, y cuando los niños no pueden cumplir con estos anhelos tanto el padre como el niño se sienten frustrados y afligidos.

Los padres frecuentemente olvidan que los niños pequeños tienen dificultad en poder sentárse tranquilos y mantenerse en silencio. Esperar un comportamiento ejemplar en situaciones adultas (p.ej. museos, restaurantes finos, salas de espera de los doctores o aviones), sin proveer distracciones apropiadas lleva a la desilusión y a marcar a un niño como que fuera "malo".

*** El nacimiento de un hermano**
Esta es frecuentemente una importante causa de ansiedad entre los niños. Con cuidado y apoyo de parte de los padres, este tipo de tensión puede ser vigorizante, alentando a un niño a ser más independiente, a colaborar, y a ser más empático. Pero en situaciones menos generosas, en las que los niños pequeños no son ayudados a superar la rivalidad, esta tensión puede tener consecuencias malsanas (ver: "When Push Comes to Shove: Understanding and Reducing Sibling Rivalry, February, 1997" - Empujones y Tirones: Comprendiendo y Reduciendo la Rivalidad Entre Hermanos, Febrero, 1997).

*** Viendo exceso de televisión**
De violentas caricaturas a repetidos informes noticiosos de desastres naturales y violencia, los niños están regularmente expuestos a contenidos impropios y que les dan miedo. Juegos violentos de computadora y videos aumentan el problema.

Debido a que sus conceptos de tiempo y espacio todavía son rudimentarios, los niños pequeños no pueden comprender que los huracanes, sismos, incendios, asesinatos o secuestros, son sucesos raros y que generalmente no suceden a la vuelta de la esquina. Dosis repetidas de violencia, especialmente la violencia de

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la vida real en las noticias, socava la creencia de un niño en la seguridad de su ambiente inmediato. Aparte de las pesadillas y ansiedad sobre su seguridad personal inspiradas por la TV, hay también el riesgo de que los niños desarrollen un cínico estilo adulto sobre su mundo, creyendo que toda la gente es mala o que no merece confianza, o que el mundo es un lugar inseguro (ver "Spellbound: Is Television Seducing Our Kids?, April, 1997" - Deslumbrado: ¿Está seduciendo la televisión a nuestros niños?, Abril, 1997)

* **Los problemas experimentados por padres también afectan a los niños**

Muchos niños se topan con los oleajes causados por los problemas de los adultos. Ya sea que la inseguridad resulta de la pérdida de un trabajo, la desmoralización de un divorcio, o ansiedad por un pariente enfermo, los problemas frecuentemente distraen a los padres de las necesidades de sus niños. Cambios en la rutina, disminución de atención, reducción de la actitud sustentadora, y un ambiente doméstico cargado de tensión tienen un impacto negativo sobre los niños.

* **Demasiado de una cosa buena**

Por último, al final de la lista de factores que producen ansiedades, y seguramente no el menor de ellos, está la tendencia actual de matricular a los niños en una amplia variedad de actividades extracurriculares. El resultado es frecuentemente demasiada actividad programada y demasiado poco tiempo para reflexionar, jugar y relajarse.

¿Cuales son los síntomas de ansiedad en los niños pequeños? Así como Jake retrocedió a chuparse el dedo y a tener un comportamiento irritable, y Cherise comenzó a gritar y golpear a otros niños y a ponerse desobediente, muchos niños pequeños exhiben su tensión en comportamientos que típicamente se asocian con edades más tempranas, tal como mojar la cama (después de un entrenamiento para ir al baño exitoso), y chuparse el dedo. Otros pueden mostrar un comportamiento errático, disposición a tener pataletas y berrinches y problemas de sueño, así como también llorar, aferrarse más a los padres y lloriquear. Mientras la mayoría de los niños manifestarán uno o más de estos comportamientos en cualquier día determinado, un niño crónicamente estresado mostrará más de ellos y con mayor frecuencia. También pueden mostrar síntomas generalmente asociados con la tensión en los adultos tales como problemas digestivos, dolores y aflicciones, sarpullidos y problemas a la piel.

¿Qué pueden hacer los padres? ¿Pueden "vacunar" a sus niños contra la preocupación? Numerosos libros se han escrito sobre el tema de la tensión y la ansiedad en niños pequeños, incluso algunos que sugieren que es posible proteger a los niños de cualquier clase de ansiedad. Esta última no es una meta realista. Los niños, tanto como sus padres, siempre encararán tensiones y presiones de la vida que provienen tanto de situaciones negativas o positivas. Además, los niños pequeños deben también lidiar con exigencias diarias, alterar horarios, y abandonar rutinas habituales a fin de lograr nuevas aptitudes. Finalmente, por supuesto, están los traumas inesperados que producen tensión en las familias tal como la pérdida del trabajo, las enfermedades, o el cambiarse de casa.

Proteger a los niños de todas estas tensiones sería tanto imposible como indeseable. Les negaría la oportunidad de desarrollar las técnicas necesarias para arreglárselas, las que se necesitan para sobrevivir en la vida adulta. Sin embargo, hay varias cosas que los padres pueden hacer para asegurar que las tensiones se mantengan dentro de la capacidad de un niño para valerse por si mismo, o ayudar a un niño a desarrollar mejores habilidades para desenvolverse.

* **Fomente en su niño logros apropiados para su edad.**

Aprender a vestirse, clasificar bloques, y resolver acertijos da a los niños pequeños un sentido de capacidad y una convicción en sí mismos, lo que forma la base de una posterior reciedumbre.

* **Trabaje junto a su niño para resolver problemas diarios, enseñándole como pensar para resolverlos y aliéntelo a continuar tratando frente a la adversidad.**

En vez de correr arriba a ayudar a su niña a acarrear sus libros y juguetes, sugiera que encuentre una manera para bajarlos. Si ella encuentra un talego para transportarlos, alábela por ser una "buena pensadora" en vez de una "buena niña". En vez de poner las piezas de un acertijo para su niño de tres años, sugiera maneras de abordar el acertijo: "primero busca los rincones, luego los bordes, y después todos los pedazos del mismo color".

Si su niño tiene dificultad para compartir sus juguetes, reconozca que "a veces es difícil compartir, pero yo sé que tú le darás a tu amigo un turno dentro de un momento cuando estés listo". Tales mensajes indican que usted tiene fe en su niño y en su capacidad para perseverar ante la adversidad.

* **Ayude a su niño a aprender a lidiar con la frustración y la desilusión, preferentemente en dosis pequeñas y apropiadas para su edad.**

Los padres deben poner las desilusiones de sus niños en perspectiva. Si el viaje prometido al zoológico tiene que ser cancelado, o el helado deseado no esta disponible, es mejor no sobre-dramatizar la desilusión. Reconocerla, por cierto, pero asegúrele a su niño que habrá otra oportunidad, y que hay otras posibilidades. Un apoyo tal ayuda a su niño a poner las cosas en perspectiva también.

* **Tener expectativas realistas.**

Ningún niño puede ser perfecto, o ser el mejor en todo. Como sociedad, parecemos esperar demasiada capacidad de los niños. Es importante tener algún conocimiento sobre el desarrollo de los niños de modo que los padres sepan que puede esperarse a ciertas edades y como relacionarse con niños de diferentes temperamentos.

* **Haga elecciones cuidadosas en lo que a el cuidado de niños o escuela respecta.**

Los padres deben confiar totalmente en el proveedor de cuidado de los niños o en el programa al que asiste. La continuidad de cuidado debería ser una meta. Mover a los niños dentro y fuera de centros y escuelas es muy desconcertante. Los niños necesitan estabilidad en sus vidas para poder concentrarse en dominar nuevas aptitudes y poder desarrollar relaciones sociales.

* **Simplifique la vida.**

Las actividades extras deberían evaluarse y ser reducidas si es necesario. Pregúntese a si misma si esta actividad es algo que su niño disfruta y quiere hacer, o si es algo que usted quiere que haga. Disminuya la marcha. Deje abundante tiempo y espacio para simplemente jugar, porque es así como los niños aprenden mejor.

* **Ame a sus niños incondicionalmente por lo que son, más que por lo que pueden lograr.**

No compare a su niño con otros niños.

* **Lidie constructivamente con los puntos y problemas en su vida.**

Sea consciente que ser padre no tiene lugar en un vacío. Los padres que están bajo tensión frecuentemente se ponen más críticos y menos sustentadores y pacientes.

Es la responsabilidad de un padre mantener a sus niños seguros y encontrar un balance entre los desafíos o las frustraciones menores, y las condiciones que son demasiado estresantes. Encontrar este balance es un arte más bien que una ciencia. Cada niño es único, y los padres necesitan adaptar su enfoque al niño en base a su edad y personalidad.

Toni H. Liebman, MS, tiene más de 30 años de experiencia como especialista en educación de niños pequeños y en educación de padres.

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Illustrations
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
Copyright 1998 North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Printed in the U.S.A.
To subscribe, send payment, payable to
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Volume 13, Number 11 ★ *Special Six-Page Edition* ★ December 1998

A PARENT'S VOICE:

Challenges of Consistent Parenting

While helping my five-year-old son Jesse get ready for bed one night, I realized that my "help" was governed by several conflicting motives. I wanted to teach him independence (to brush his teeth, get in his pajamas, and clean his room all on his own) but I also wanted all these things to get done by 8:30 p.m. Both goals seem reasonable to me, but they also usually run contrary to each other: getting Jesse to bed on time generally requires that I do some things for him. My "solution" to this dilemma is to randomly stress one goal rather than the other. Since some days I seem to be more concerned with independence and other days with staying on schedule, my so-called guidance must seem fairly erratic to Jesse.

I've discovered that my parenting is influenced by many different motives, and they're often incongruous with one another. My behavior usually makes sense to me at the time, but since it varies to fit the circumstances of the moment, it seems inevitable that my children will come to view my parenting as a mix of guidance and confusion.

The Gradual Transfer of Responsibility

When lions have a litter, at first they feed their cubs with prey that's already prepped for consumption. Before long the parents bring home wounded prey, and teach their children to hunt for themselves. Once the cubs are about a year old they're expected to catch their food entirely on their own. While I plan to assist my cubs with their hunting for at least 18 years, it's this transfer of responsibility -- preparing them for independence -- that's the #1 goal of my parenting.

should I be the bad guy! stop them?

My mistakes and misjudgments, however, can make this motive difficult to detect. Unlike lions, which only have to teach their young ones to hunt, we humans have to supply our offspring with an array of skills before they're ready to leave home, and it's difficult to know when they're ready to take on what responsibility. For example, I still take my seven-year-old son Dustin's hand when crossing the street, even though he has already proved himself capable of crossing alone. I erred in the opposite direction recently with Jesse while on a bumpy subway ride: I judged that he did *not* need his hand held, and he lost his balance and fell teeth first into a nearby seat. My eight-month-old son Tyler is easier to judge in this respect since he can be trusted with so little, but in the coming months I'm sure he'll receive his fair share of over-protection and exposure to danger. But whether I'm holding on too tightly or not tightly enough, the motive behind my decision-making is this gradual transfer of responsibility.

A Functioning and Somewhat Orderly Life

The short-term goal of having a life that runs on schedule (being on time for school, family outings, meals, etc.), needless to say to anyone who has children, frequently runs contrary to a parent's loftier long-term goals. When teaching independence, for example, I'll try to make my sons understand that having a clean room is more in their interest than mine -- it means their belongings will be easier to find and less likely to be accidentally stepped on. But when it's bedtime and their floor is still obscured by a layer of clothes and toys, the priority switches to just staying on schedule. I may command them to put all their belongings away immediately, or clean up for them, or just wearily tell them "let's leave it a mess and get to it tomorrow." But whether I'm being too authoritarian, too indulgent, or randomly breaking home rules, my motive is to have a functioning and somewhat orderly life.

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Respect

I don't equate being respected with unquestioning obedience. As a kid I always found adult phrases such as "Because I said so," and "Don't back-talk me," infuriating, and to this day I still interpret such expressions as a rude way of saying "I don't have to explain because I have more power than you." As long as it's done politely, I *do* want my children to question my parenting. And as they get older, I hope they won't accept my, or anybody else's, ideas – whether about religion, government, or the definition of "career success" – without thinking matters through on their own.

Aside from that, my approach to respect is often inconsistent. When I encounter disobedience mixed with rudeness sometimes I'll raise my voice in a way that makes me later wonder if they'll have nightmares about a daddy-monster. At other times, my route is to be too lax, particularly when I don't have the commitment to enforce a command. For instance, at Dustin's 7th birthday party he and his friends were getting so wild that part of me felt I should calm their roughhousing down. But though I could control my own son, I didn't want to attempt quieting down his 15 friends, especially if it meant turning into a dictator at a supposedly fun event. Since I wasn't committed to enforcement, I decided not to do anything, rationalizing that the worst that could happen would be someone getting a bloody nose. So while I swing between aggressiveness and passivity, my motive for both is to maintain respect.

Being Liked

Almost all parents want to be liked by their children. A problem with this desire is that its direct pursuit destroys its chance of ever being achieved. There are few quicker routes to arousing contempt from children than constantly courting their affection. Try to always be your child's "friend" and you're in an impossible position for unpopular tasks such as teaching them civility, setting limits, or having dinner on time.

But though I understand this, I have to admit that the motive of being liked still influences me, such as when I get them toys in response to (polite) pleading, or give in to playing tackle-type games when they're supposed to be quieting down for bedtime. This motive usually runs contrary to most of my other child-rearing goals, and its occasional victory adds to the maze I give my kids for standards.

Fun

Prompted by an excessive amount of noise coming from my children's room one night, I looked in to see what was going on. Dustin had an excited gleam in his eye and was shouting to a friend, "Wanna try something that's *really* fun?!!" as he leaped off his top bunk bed onto a nearby couch.

Now ... to let him and the others continue doing this would hardly be compatible with my mission of increasing their sense of responsibility. But I have to admit it really did look like fun, and I was getting a kick out of seeing how thrilled they looked while leaping through the air. It may not be the first priority of parenting, but like most parents I want my kids to have good memories of their childhood. I *did* want to let them know this was unacceptable behavior, but I *didn't* want to stop them from having this particular moment of abandon.

My solution, if you can call it that, was to rationalize their actions (and my inaction) by deciding that what they were doing wasn't really all that destructive, and to just watch until they almost done. I then told them that although this kind of leaping was a lot of fun, it was wrecking the couch, and from now on they couldn't do it anymore. Since they were already tired of it, they agreed.

Ignorance

Nobody gets in the driver's seat of a car for the first time and starts driving through a crowded city. What qualifications are needed to be a parent? Ideally one should have (for starters) a love for children, a flexible work schedule with an adequate income, and an enormous amount of patience, energy and empathy. But since the only real-life prerequisite is fertility, it's no surprise that most parents, if held against the ideal, are unfit in one way or another.

Kids (including adult children) rarely sympathize with this. We generally don't think of our parents as those who were once just ordinary people who happened to start a family. The more common view is seeing them as large imposing figures who had always been parents, but just weren't very good at it.

When it comes to difficult situations, the instinctive parental response, as many parenting books point out, can be the wrong one: trying to talk kids out of their negative feelings rather than acknowledging those feelings, comparing one sibling favorably to another in order to "encourage" the slighted child to behave, making negative self-fulfilling prophesies, etc.

All these just come out automatically, and without thought to the long-term effect. Parenting books have helped me but I still find myself occasionally violating their principles; the wrong response just comes out so naturally. I see many other parents violate these principles as well, often acting out the perfect examples of what *not* to do. The result is that parents frequently drive ugly wedges between themselves and their children, and among their children. It's often just a matter of ignorance, and there's probably no other job where there's a greater disparity between the huge demands and the utter lack of requirements.

Selfish Concerns

As a kid, I thought that it was somehow "wrong" for parents to be motivated by their selfish concerns: now I see it as very understandable. Back then I thought a parent's job was being a parent: now I see it as a big part of my life but not 100%. And it's a part that I sometimes want to get a break from. Sometimes I just don't want to deal with changing diapers, breaking up fights, or even teaching them how to tell time – sometimes I just want to play my guitar or spend time with my wife. When this motive takes over I minimize my parenting efforts, and do things such as ignore their bedtime schedule or let them watch TV for too long. This is not a matter of ignorance; in these instances I *know* I'm being negligent: it's just that my selfish interests are overpowering those of my parenting.

Clear-cut rules of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable help a child make sense out of life. And if only a parent's life didn't come with so many warring motives, perhaps we could better provide our children with a rock-solid consistency. Since life *does* happen to come with such obstacles, my message to my own children is this: it's true that parental behavior may be confusing if you judge it solely from what you see. But once you understand all the conflicting goals in the background, parents begin to make just a bit more sense.

Todd Gates works for a pharmaceutical company and lives with his wife and three sons in Brooklyn, New York. This is his first published essay.

Bottom Line Rules?

Parents often struggle not only to do the right thing, but to figure out what the right thing is. So what is it that parents really need to know? Are there bottom line rules that transcend popular theories, best-seller lists, and trendy techniques?

Well, the bad news is that if there was one perfect rule that worked all the time in every house we would have figured it out by now. No one approach or practice will work all the time in all families.

The good news is that there are guidelines, rules, and expectations that can make a difference in how you feel about your children and your parenting.

Here are some tips that this professional thinks are worth keeping on the refrigerator door.

Have realistic expectations of yourself and your child

We know that it is important to have realistic expectations for our children, but we need to be realistic about our own behavior as well. I was meeting with a parent recently who was trying hard to stop the cycle of angry, screaming battles with her six-year-old. She felt that her daughter's tantrums were a mirror of her own angry displays and that she rarely felt "in charge" as a parent. She often watched her husband's smooth, patient problem-solving skills and felt just plain "stupid." The parent believed that discipline should work instantly. If she disciplined her child on Wednesday, why was she still misbehaving on Thursday? Not only did the parent get angry at her child when she misbehaved, but the parent became even more angry and frustrated that her discipline had not been effective. Teaching children is an ongoing process, with hills and valleys, and success and failures.

Be persistent

Only on TV do adorable kids change their bad ways, smile and thank their parents for their guidance, and do it in less than 19 minutes. In real life if we expect compliance with no opposition or pain, we will become frustrated and give up far too quickly in our attempts to teach our children better behaviors – that includes toilet training, learning social and play skills, doing homework, or their own laundry. We often get exhausted when we feel that it's taking months to teach our children what we want them to do. We are misled into thinking that labor pains end after birth, but sometimes, when you are holding a screaming baby who just can't sleep, or a sad three-year-old who has bitten half the children in his day care center, you realize that the true labor has just begun. But repetition is the true teacher and not a sign of failure. We need to expect that it will take our children time to truly become experts in their new behavior.

Be a good role model

All of us want our kids not only to listen to us, but to want to learn from us. This requires special handling – we have to be respectful of our own family because this is truly learned by example. We can be respectful of our children's feelings ("I know you're mad at your sister for taking your toy and breaking it") and still be clear about not accepting their behavior ("But you are not allowed to hit her"). We can be upset about their actions (How could you have taken your crayons and scribbled on the walls") and still be helpful and clever with our response ("Now that I know how smart you are about making a mess, I am going to teach you about cleaning up").

Momentary happiness is overrated

Parents who believe the measure of their success is their children's immediate happiness may be in a for a long and rocky ride. Children are not happy learning to use the potty, but it will give them more independence. School may make them a little anxious at first but growing up is really a good thing. Working extra hard to finish a project may be frustrating, but the feeling of accomplishment for a job well done is powerful. Learning is hard work and sometimes we are so afraid of our children's discomfort that we fail to teach them that pride in their efforts brings great satisfaction. The easy way, where we as parents make concession after concession because of tears and tantrums, sometimes just makes it harder for us in the long run.

Flexibility and Consistency

For rules of safety there must be 100% consistency and vigilance – a child can never be playing with fire, alone in the car, or unsupervised in the bath tub. We should never be wishy-washy about rules that can save our children's lives. Having said all this, I need to say that yes, sometimes my kids had ice cream for a meal, ate their lunch out of my grocery cart, whined for toys at the check-out counter (which they got), and certainly went to bed without brushing their teeth. Flexibility about rules actually helps us and our children think about using good judgement. Sometimes an early bedtime is excused because grandma is visiting for the holiday and it is a loving and special treat to have her company. And sometimes the lesson learned is one of compassion, like when we offer to clean up after a sister who is exhausted and upset about her soccer defeat.

Parenting is tougher than most of us thought, but being good observers of ourselves and our children and being aware that growing up is not a painless process can ease some of the worry we feel about doing it right.

Sandra R. Wolkoff, CSW

In Coming Months ...

- ✓ Computers
- ✓ Children and Loss
- ✓ Discipline
- ✓ Math
- ✓ Kids and Music

Dear Reader

Information often comes from experts, but wisdom can be found in many places. Nuggets of insight which go straight to our hearts often come from those who can look at themselves as parents and share what they discovered.

Years ago I had a neighbor, Annabelle. We used to sit outside and watch our kids play. Actually, we watched her kids, ages two and five. My son was still an infant and too young to be an active explorer. One day we were sitting and talking. "Do you know what I need to do every once in a while?" she asked. "I need to sit and really watch my kids." She was right, of course. Sitting and really paying attention can tell parents a great deal about their children. And taking a step back and watching ourselves can tell us a great deal about our parenting.

This month we feature *A Parent's Voice* by Todd Gates, who has taken a critical look at his own behavior and realized he is not always a consistent parent. We all know we are supposed to be the epitome of constancy. And it is true that setting the rules and enforcing them is crucial. How else will our kids learn what's important and what's not important? How else will they know that they have to take what we say seriously?

As a developmental psychologist, I'd be the last person to say that consistency isn't crucial. But as a living, breathing parent, I know it is not always possible. Todd explains why with his insightful, "from the trenches" first person essay.

Have a healthy and happy New Year.

Neala Schwartzberg

Holiday Blues

Ah, the holidays. The stores are filled with gifts waiting to be purchased, and the magazines with recipes perfect for those warm, loving family dinners. Even television shows us the happy family gatherings. Yet not everyone feels the joy of the season. For some people the stress of holidays can bring on a serious case of the blues. Why? Our lives rarely match media images. We may be single parents with little family nearby. We may have a big family but the gatherings are not always filled with tolerance and good cheer. Our budgets may not be able to handle buying our children all the toys they've been requesting. Simply being required to be happy can be a strain.

Although holiday blues eventually lift, here are some things to try.

- *Rent a video, make brownies and snuggle up with your youngster. If you're going to be alone, rent a movie that you always wanted to see, curl up with the book you've been wanting to read, or play the computer game you've been eager to try.*
- *Buy yourself a small gift. It doesn't have to be expensive. There's probably something you've wanted but just never got around to purchasing it. Now is a good time.*
- *Remember that depression is made worse by insufficient sleep and poor eating habits. Take care of your health. Get some exercise. It's probably one of the best things you can do to lift your mood.*
- *It's corny, but do count your blessings. Make a list of the good things in your life. If you need to, write them up and tape it to your bedroom wall.*
- *Friends can be (and often are) family. These are the people who keep us afloat all year. Why not spend the holidays together too? Plan an outing. Perhaps you can drive to another town and explore.*
- *Don't try to buy happiness. Spending more than you can afford only leaves a mound of bills lasting for months.*
- *Learn to accept your family. All families have their problems. But this is the time of year we seem to expect them to change. They won't. But that doesn't mean we should let their behavior make us miserable. Accepting people for who they are is one of the best gifts we can give ourselves.*
- *Make a donation or become involved with a worthy organization. Compassion, caring, generosity to others is balm for our spirit.*

Kids feel holiday blues too. Starting in November holiday decorations, plans for parties, commercials for toys, holiday TV specials and movies start flooding our children with the promise of good times and great toys. The wish list for toys and gifts grows with no limits or denials in sight. Children tend to stay up later because of special activities and shopping, and often get sicker as the winter months approach. In other words, kids are really stressed, physically and emotionally. Is there anything you can do? Yes - you can make a difference for your child.

- *Keep as close to a normal routine as possible. Sometimes it seems that kids are on a sugar kick from Halloween through New Year's Day. Hide the treats, give them away, use fruits and breads as substitutes, and keep your kid's eating and sleeping routine predictable and healthy.*
- *Say "no" to excessive social activities. Five-year-olds do not have to go to every party. Two parties in one day is too much for an adult, let alone a young child. Limit those special nighttime activities, such as visit to local sights or the mall, to the ones that make the most sense for your child, your time, and your budget.*
- *Family time is not always fun time. For families with emotional, financial, or other burdens pretending that everything is all right when it's not is exhausting. Be realistic about what your children can or can't do for the holiday season. Your children can be far more helpful to you if they have some understanding of what is going on around them than if they are confused. In addition, family reunions are not always joyous events and if relatives are upset with each other after ten minutes, a large family dinner may end up in turmoil. Prepare distractions and leave a little early if you have to.*
- *Teach your children from an early age to be wise consumers. The toys they open as holiday presents often don't look the same as they did in the TV commercials. Go to the toy store early in the season and show your children the difference between the gorgeous and enormous car they see on the television screen and the much smaller toy in the box.*
- *Teach your children to appreciate what they have, and hopefully they will learn, along with you, that some of what is truly important can be found in what they already have, and not in what they want you to buy.*

THE DOCTORS CORNER

Good Health Habits

"Wash your hands." "Cover your mouth when you sneeze." "Brush your teeth."

Young children often ignore these pleas, but parents know the importance of good personal hygiene habits. Proper hygiene is not accomplished by simply looking groomed and clean. The spread of illness can be dramatically reduced in homes, schools, and in child care settings if good hygiene is practiced.

There are several ways that parents can influence their children's health simply by encouraging some positive health habits. Make these part of your children's regular routine. Children love routine because it allows them to feel safe and gives them some sense of control.

Practicing good health habits with your children encourages them to be active in their own care, and teaches them the importance of proper hygiene.

There are several proven ways of cutting down on the incidence of illness in homes and at school.

Without a doubt, of all the things that you can do, teaching your child how and when to wash his or her hands is the most important factor in reducing the spread of germs. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control state, "Handwashing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection." Thorough washing, using soap, friction, and running water is essential. Rubbing the hands together using a small amount of soap helps to open the pores and loosens the bacteria from the skin. Thoroughly rinsing hands carries the germs down the drain. The water temperature should be comfortably warm which will encourage you and your child to wash longer.

Handwashing will be more appealing to the young child if you make it fun and interesting. Sing about bubbles and germs going down the drain. Talk about the temperature of the water or the smell of the soap.

Teach your child to wash his or her hands after play, toileting, diaper changing, nose blowing, handling animals, and before eating. Handwashing will remove dirt which may contain lead and other toxins as well as harmful bacteria. Because dirt can get easily trapped under the nails, it is a good idea to keep children's nails short and clean.

Bathing and hair washing provides parents with an opportunity for teaching as well as a time to examine your children for any rashes, bruises or unusual spots or sores. Early detection of head lice or fungal infections of the scalp can help reduce the spread to other family members or close contacts. Most children love bathtime and will use it to explore concepts such as sinking, floating, pouring, volume, and bubbles. The frequency of bathing and hair washing may depend on the condition of the child's skin and scalp. Your pediatrician can advise you in special situations.

Tissues should be available and used for nose wiping or blowing. Teach your children to cough, sneeze and blow their noses into a tissue. Secretions that are contained in tissues are less likely to be passed on to others. Children should discard the tissue and wash their hands immediately afterwards. Germs left on the skin can be transmitted to others by direct or indirect contact.

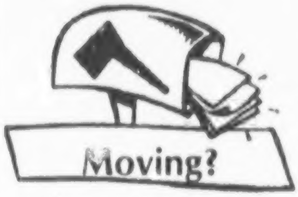
Children often have favorite toys or blankets that they take everywhere. They get "dragged around" and often are full of germs. Washing and laundering of those favorite items should be done on a regular basis. Disinfecting surfaces with a bleach-and-water solution (1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart water) is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

Another effective way to reduce the incidence of illness is to ventilate indoor space regularly. Illnesses are spread more easily in closed areas, and by opening windows you can help decrease the transmission of airborne diseases from one person to another. Open windows as often as possible, even in the winter, if only for a few minutes. When rooms are artificially cooled or heated, make sure that filters are cleaned periodically. In order for filters to effectively remove harmful irritants from the air, they must be free of dust and debris.

Children should be taught not to touch another person's blood. Although the risk of contracting an illness in this manner is slim, it is good health practice to avoid direct contact.

Parents and care givers are most influential in teaching children good hygiene practices. By acting as positive role models and showing a firm commitment to good health, you influence your children to make these habits their own.

***Claudia Domb, RN, BA** is an elementary school nurse and consultant/trainer to child care facilities. She is a former Director of Health in Child Care for a chain of day care centers and member of the Medical Advisory Committee of the Child Care Council of Nassau County.*



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Enclose your old address label along with your new address (please print and be sure to tell us the effective date of the change) and send it to:

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And remember to fill out a "Change of Address" Mail Forwarding Order at your local post office. Please allow for six weeks for address changes to go into effect, so please notify everyone well in advance of your move.

Library Resources

Books of the Season

🕮 ***The Borrowed Hanukkah Latkes*** by Linda Glaser; illustrated by Nancy Cote; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1997; Hardcover, $15.95. More and more family are coming to celebrate the last night of Hanukkah, but there's no more ingredients for the potato latkes. Mrs. Greenberg is happy to provide whatever is needed, but she won't join the festivities. A sweet story for children to read and reread.

🕮 ***Christmas*** by Miriam Nerlove; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1990; Softcover, $4.95. A family celebrates Christmas and describes the religious significance in easy-to-understand language for little ones.

🕮 ***Christmas Paper Chains*** by Stewart & Sally Walton; Tupelo Books; New York, 1997; Activity book, $7.95. Stencils and paper to make decorations or even a special table-top Christmas tree.

🕮 ***Diane Goode's American Christmas***; Puffin Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, $6.99. A little something for everyone in this collection of poems, songs, and stories.

🕮 ***The Gifts of Kwanzaa*** by Synthia Saint James; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1994; Softcover, $5.95. A colorful and informative book about the seven days, seven principles and seven symbols of Kwanzaa.

🕮 ***Hanukkah*** by Miriam Nerlove; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1989 (softcover, $4.95). A family celebrates Hanukkah while remembering the story behind the holiday.

🕮 ***Hanukkah Fun*** by Katherine Janus Kahn; Kar-Ben Copies, Inc.; Rockville, MD, 1991; Activity book. A little of this and a little of that. Activities for children involving mazes and masks, dot-to-dot and more.

🕮***Happy New Year, Pooh!***; by Kathleen Zoehfeld; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $11.95. Pooh and his friends discover they have run out of months. But their sadness turns to happiness when they discover a party in progress to welcome in the new year.

🕮 ***King Island Christmas*** by Jean Rogers; illustrated by Rie Munoz; Mulberry Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95. The church on King Island has been dark, awaiting the arrival of the new father to celebrate Christmas. But he's stranded at sea and soon the ice and snow will close in around this Eskimo village cutting them off for many months. Can they find a way to bring him to his new home? Yes, they can.

🕮 ***The Kwanzaa Contest*** by Miriam Moore and Penny Taylor; illustrated by Laurie Spencer; Hyperion Books for Children; New York, 1996; Softcover, $3.95. This is really a book for third graders, but it also makes a good book for parents to read to their youngsters. Its the story of Ronald who doesn't think he is brave, or talented, or special. But he does have gifts nonetheless. His carved alligator wins the Kwanzaa contest.

🕮 ***The Menorah Story*** by Mark Podwal; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. A history of the Jewish menorah and the story of Hanukkah.

The Night Before Christmas by Jan Brett; poem by Clement Moore; G.P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 1998 (hardcover, $16.99). A nostalgic and richly illustrated rendition of the famous poem. An excellent "curl up together" book.

🕮 ***Pooh's Christmas Box*** by Kathleen W. Zoehfeld; Disney Enterprises; New York, 1997; Pop-up, $9.95. The residents of Hundred-Acre Wood are celebrating Christmas together.

🕮 ***Seven Candles for Kwanzaa*** by Andrea Davis Pinkney; pictures by Brian Pinkney; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $5.99. A beautiful and evocative description and explanation of a family's celebration of Kwanzaa.

🕮 ***The Story of Hanukkah*** by Amy Ehrlich; paintings by Ori Sherman; Puffin Pied Piper Books; New York, 1989; Softcover, $5.99. A detailed account of the story of Hanukkah, richly illustrated.

Celebrating Family

🕮 ***Cherish Me*** by Joyce Carol Thomas; pictures by Nneka Bennett; HarperFestival; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $9.95. A simple yet beautiful poem warmly illustrated.

🕮 ***Our Granny*** by Margaret Wild; pictures by Julie Vivas; Houghton Mifflin; Boston, 1994; Softcover, $5.95. Grannies come in all varieties of sizes, shapes, colors and interests.

🕮 ***Will You Take Care of Me?*** by Margaret Park Bridges; illustrated by Melissa Sweet; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1998. Little kangaroo is worried that as he grows he'll change. Will his mother still love him? "What if I turned into a field of flowers?" His mother responds "I'd breathe in the wonderful smell of you."

🕮 ***You and Me, Little Bear*** by Martin Waddell; illustrated by Barbara Firth; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1996; Hardcover, $15.99. Little Bear and Big Bear work and play together sharing a very special time.

🕮 ***You're Just What I Need*** by Ruth Krauss; pictures by Julia Noonan; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. Mother tries to guess what is the strange lump under the blankets in her bed. "It's not laundry, or a bundle of carrots. "It's ME!" calls out her daughter as she pops out. A delicious book to read aloud.

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
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Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
11 Issues per Year
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
Two Years -- US$55
Three Years -- US$78
English/Spanish Language Edition
One Year -- US$40
Two Years -- US$75
Three Years -- US$99
All Other Countries Add Postage
Please send inquiries to publisher for multiple subscription orders and reprints.

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE
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CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

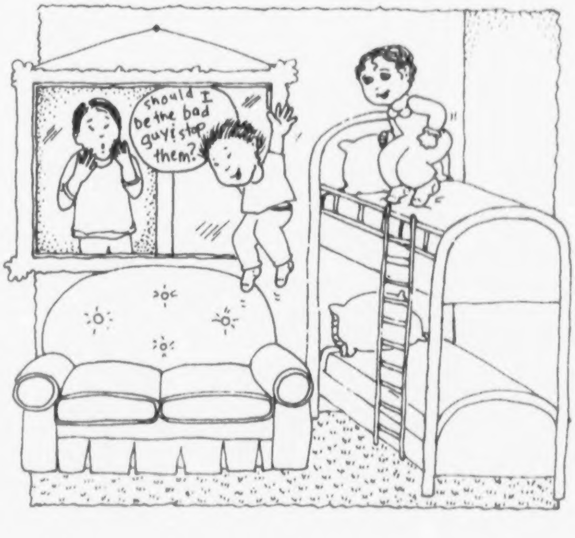
En Español

Volume 13, Number 11 *Special Edition* December 1998

LA VOZ DE LOS PADRES:

Los Desafíos de ser un Padre o Madre Consistente

Mientras ayudaba a mi hijo Jesse de cinco años a prepararse para ir a la cama, me di cuenta que mi "ayuda" estaba condicionada por varias razones contradictorias. Quería enseñarle independencia (a lavarse los dientes, ponerse los pijamas y a limpiar su cuarto por si solo) pero también quería que todo esto se hiciera antes de las 8:30 PM. Ambas metas me parecían razonables, pero al mismo tiempo estas metas son, generalmente, contradictorias: acostar a Jesse a tiempo generalmente significa que yo haga ciertas cosas por él. Mi "solución" a este dilema es recalcar aleatoriamente una meta en vez de otra. Ya que algunos días pareciera que me preocupa más la independencia y en otros acatar el horario, mi supuesta orientación le debe haber parecido bastante errática a Jesse.


should I be the bad guy&stop them?

He descubierto que mi manera de criar a mis niños está influenciada por muchas distintas razones, y que a veces, estas son incongruentes. Mi conducta generalmente tiene sentido en el momento dado pero, ya que varía para adaptarse a las circunstancias del momento, parece inevitable que mis niños perciban mi manera de ser padre como una mezcla de consejos y confusión.

La Transferencia Paulatina de Responsabilidad

Cuando los leones tienen una camada, inicialmente alimentan a sus cachorros con una presa que ya ha sido preparada para su consumo. Un tiempo después, los padres traen la presa herida, y le enseñan a los cachorros a cazar solos. Cuando los cachorros tienen un año se espera que cacen sus alimentos solos. Yo espero poder ayudar a mis cachorros a cazar por lo menos hasta que tengan los 18 años, y es precisamente esta transferencia de responsabilidad -prepararlos para la independencia- mi meta primordial de ser padre.

Sin embargo, mis errores y desaciertos pueden hacer que esta razón sea difícil de detectar. A diferencia de los leones, que solamente tiene que enseñarles a los cachorros a cazar, los humanos tenemos que darles a nuestros hijos una gama de habilidades antes de que estén listos de irse de la casa, y es difícil saber cuando están listos para asumir una cierta responsabilidad. Por ejemplo, yo todavía le tomo la mano a mi hijo Dustin de siete años cuando cruzamos la calle, a pesar que él ya ha probado que es capaz de cruzar solo. Me equivoqué de una manera totalmente opuesta con Jesse durante un viaje muy sacudido en el Metro: estimé que no necesitaba que lo tomaran de la mano, y perdió el equilibrio y se cayó golpeandose los dientes contra un asiento. En este sentido mi hijo Tyler de ocho meses es más fácil de juzgar ya que no se le puede confiar con casi nada, pero en los próximos meses estoy seguro que recibirá su dosis justa de sobre protección y exposición al peligro. Pero ya sea que me estoy aferrando demasiado o muy poco, la razón que inspira mi toma de decisiones es esta transferencia paulatina de responsabilidad.

Una Vida Funcional y Hasta Cierto Punto Ordenada

La meta a corto plazo de tener una vida que funciona con un horario, (llegar a tiempo al colegio, reuniones familiares, comidas, etc.) y huelga decírselo a una

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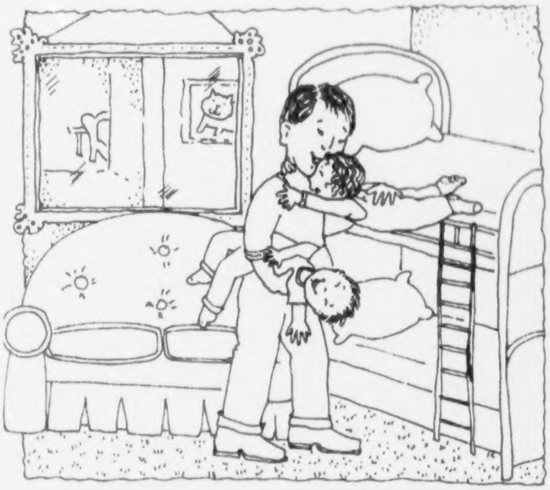
persona con niños, está a menudo en contradicción con las metas más fundamentales de largo plazo de los padres. Por ejemplo, cuando les enseño independencia, los trato de hacer entender que una habitación limpia les conviene más a ellos que a mi -significa que sus cosas van a ser más fáciles de encontrar y es menos probable que alguien las pise. Pero cuando es hora de acostarse y el piso todavía está cubierto de una capa de ropa y de juguetes, la prioridad cambia a sencillamente no atrasarse. Quizás los obligue a guardar todas sus cosas inmediatamente, u ordenarlas yo mismo, o simplemente les digo "dejemos este desorden y mañana lo arreglamos". Pero si estoy siendo demasiado autoritario, indulgente, o rompiendo las reglas de la casa aleatoriamente, mi razón es tener un hogar funcional y una vida hasta cierto punto ordenada.

Respeto

Yo no equiparo ser respetado con obediencia ciega.

Cuando era niño siempre pensaba que las expresiones de los adultos tales como "Porque yo digo", y "No me contestes", eran enfurecedoras, y hasta hoy todavía las interpreto como una manera mal educada de decir "No tengo por qué explicar nada porque tengo más poder que tú". Con tal que se haga con educación, quiero que mis hijos cuestionen mi manera de ser padre. A medida que crecen, espero que no acepten mis ideas, -o las de otros- ya sea sobre religión, política, o la definición de una "carrera exitosa" sin pensar sobre estas cosas por si mismos.

Fuera de eso, mi enfoque sobre el respeto es frecuentemente inconsistente. Cuando me enfrento con desobediencia combinada con mala educación a veces levanto la voz de una manera que me hace preguntarme si van a tener pesadillas sobre un papi-monstruo. Otras veces, mi enfoque es ser poco rígido, especialmente cuando no estoy comprometido con el cumplimiento de la orden. Por ejemplo, en la fiesta de cumpleaños de los siete años de Dustin, el y sus amigos se estaban volviendo locos y una parte de mi tenía la sensación que debiese apaciguar sus travesuras. A pesar de que podía calmar a mi propio hijo, no quise intentar calmar a sus 15 amigos, especialmente si esto significaba convertirse en dictador en un evento supuestamente entretenido. Ya que no estaba comprometido con el cumplimiento, decidí no hacer nada, justificándolo con la idea que lo peor que podía pasar era que alguien terminara con sangre de narices. A pesar de que oscilo entre la agresividad y la pasividad, mi razón para ambas cosas es mantener el respeto.



Caer Bien

Casi todos los padres quieren caerle bien a sus hijos. Un problema con este deseo es que su búsqueda directa destruye la oportunidad de poder lograrlo. Hay pocos caminos más rápidos para merecerse el desprecio de los niños que estar siempre buscando su afecto. Al tratar siempre de ser el "amigo" de tu hijo uno se pone en una posición incomoda para las tareas impopulares como es intentar enseñarles a ser corteses, fijar límites, o cenar puntualmente.

Pero a pesar de que entiendo esto, tengo que admitir que la razón de ser gustado aún me influencia, como las veces que les traigo los juguetes como respuesta a sus súplicas, o aceptar a jugar juegos bruscos cuando, supuestamente, deben estar tranquilizándose para acostarse. Esta razón generalmente es contraria a todas las otras metas para criar a los niños y su victoria ocasional aumenta el laberinto de normas que le comunico a mis niños.

Diversión

Instado por una cantidad excesiva de ruido que salía de la habitación de mis hijos una noche, entré para ver que estaba pasando. Dustin tenía una mirada entusiasta en los ojos y le gritaba a un amigo: "¿Quieres hacer algo que es verdaderamente entretenido?!" a la vez que saltaba desde la cama superior de su camarote a un sofá que estaba cerca.

Bien... dejarlo a él y los otros continuar esta actividad sería totalmente incompatible con mi misión de aumentar su sentido de responsabilidad. Pero, tengo que reconocer que en realidad parecía entretenido y yo estaba contento de ver cuan entusiasmados estaban mientras saltaban por el espacio. Quizás no sea la primera prioridad de ser padre pero, como la mayoría de los padres, quiero que mis hijos tengan buenos recuerdos de su infancia. Sí quería hacerles saber que esta era una conducta inaceptable, pero no quería interrumpir este momento especial de libertad.

Mi solución, si se puede llamar así, fue justificar sus actividades (y mi inactividad) con la decisión que lo que estaban haciendo en realidad no era tan destructivo, y me dediqué simplemente a mirar hasta que casi terminaron. Entonces les dije que aunque este tipo de saltos era muy entretenido, estaban arruinando el sofá y que de ahora en adelante no lo podrían hacer más. Estuvieron de acuerdo ya que ya estaban cansados.

Ignorancia

Nadie se sube a un carro por primera vez y empieza a conducir a través de una ciudad congestionada. ¿Qué calificaciones se necesitan para ser padre? Idealmente uno debiera tener (para empezar) un gran amor hacia los niños, un horario flexible de trabajo con ingresos adecuados y una enorme cantidad de paciencia, energía y empatía. Pero ya que el único pre-requisito real es la fertilidad, no es sorprendente que la mayoría de los padres, en relación a este ideal, no son aptos de alguna manera u otra.

Los niños (incluyendo niños adultos) muy pocas veces están de acuerdo con esto.

Generalmente, no pensamos en nuestros padres como personas que eran simplemente gente común y corriente que decidieron formar una familia. La visión más generalizada es mirarlos como personajes imponentes que siempre han sido padres, pero que simplemente no eran muy buenos en ese papel.

Cuando se enfrentan situaciones difíciles, la respuesta intuitiva de los padres, como lo señalan varios libros sobre el tema, puede ser la equivocada: intentar convencer a los hijos que dejen a un lado sus sentimientos negativos en vez de reconocer esos sentimientos, comparar a un hermano favorablemente al otro para "alentar" al niño ofendido a que se porte bien, así fabricando profecías negativas autocumplidas, etc.

Todas estas cosas surgen automáticamente y sin ninguna reflexión sobre sus efectos a largo plazo. Los libros sobre el tema de criar niños me han sido útiles pero aún me encuentro violando sus principios: la respuesta equivocada simplemente aparece naturalmente. También veo a muchos otros padres violar estos principios, a veces llevando a cabo los ejemplos perfectos de lo que no se debe hacer. El resultado es que los padres frecuentemente levantan una barrera entre ellos y sus niños, y entre los mismos niños. A menudo es sencillamente ignorancia, y no hay otro trabajo donde exista una disparidad más grande entre las altísimas demandas y la total falta de preparación.

Preocupaciones Egoístas

Cuando era niño yo pensaba que estaba "mal" que los padres estuvieran motivados por sus intereses egoístas: ahora lo veo como muy comprensible. En ese entonces yo creía que la tarea del padre era ser padre: ahora lo veo como una parte importante de mi vida pero no el 100%. Y es una parte de la cual a veces me quiero desligar. A veces no quiero cambiar pañales, pacificar altercados, o incluso enseñarles a cómo ver la hora -a veces sólo quiero tocar mi guitarra o estar con mi esposa. Cuando esta motivación se apodera de mi, minimizo mis esfuerzos de ser padre, e ignoro sus horario para acostarse y los dejo mirar televisión demasiado tiempo. Esto no es por ignorancia: en estos casos sé que soy negligente: es, simplemente, que mis intereses egoístas están sobreponiéndose sobre mi papel de ser padre.

Las reglas claras de qué es aceptable y que no lo es, ayudan al niño entender la vida. Y si sólo la vida de un padre no estuviese tan llena de motivaciones contradictorias quizás pudiésemos darles a nuestros niños una consistencia férrea. Ya que la vida tiene estos obstáculos, mi mensaje a mis niños es el siguiente: es verdad que la conducta de los padres puede ser confusa si se la juzga solamente desde la perspectiva de lo que se ve. Pero una vez que se comprenden todas las metas contradictorias del trasfondo, se puede comprender a los padres un poco más.

Todd Gates trabaja en una firma farmacéutica y vive con su esposa y tres hijos en Brooklyn, Nueva York. Este es su primer ensayo publicado

¿Reglas Básicas?

Los padres frecuentemente luchan no sólo por hacer lo correcto, sino por determinar qué es lo correcto. ¿Qué es lo que realmente deben saber los padres? ¿Hay reglas básicas que trascienden las teorías populares, las listas de best sellers, o las técnicas de moda?

Bueno, las malas noticias son que si hubiese una regla perfecta que funcionase siempre, ya la hubiésemos descubierto en todo hogar. Un solo enfoque o práctica no funcionará siempre en todas las familias.

Las buenas noticias es que hay normas, reglas, y expectativas que pueden ser importantes en cuanto a lo que uno siente sobre sus niños y su manera de ser padre.

He aquí algunos consejos que este profesional cree que valen la pena pegar en la puerta del refrigerador.

Tenga expectativas realistas de si mismo y de su hijo

Sabemos que es importante tener expectativas realistas sobre nuestros hijos, pero también tenemos que ser realistas sobre nuestra propia conducta. Recientemente me reuní con una madre que estaba intentando detener el ciclo de acaloradas peleas a gritos con su hija de seis años. Ella creía que las pataletas de su hija eran un reflejo de sus propias rabietas y que pocas veces se sentía "en control" como madre. Muy a menudo observaba las habilidades de su marido para resolver conflictos y se sentía lisa y llanamente "estúpida". La madre creía que la disciplina debía funcionar instantáneamente. ¿Si disciplinaba a su hija el miércoles, por qué todavía se portaba mal el jueves? La madre no solamente se enojaba con la niña cuando se portaba mal, sino que también se enojaba y frustraba porque su disciplina no había sido efectiva. La educación de los niños es un proceso continuo, con altos y bajos, éxitos y fracasos.

Sea Persistente

Solamente en la tele niños adorables cambian su mala conducta, sonríen y le agradecen a los padres su orientación, y lo hacen en menos de 19 minutos. En la vida real si esperamos obediencia sin oposición o dolor, nos frustramos y nos damos por vencidos demasiado rápido en nuestros intentos de enseñarles a nuestros hijos conductas mejores -que incluye enseñarles ir al baño, aprender habilidades sociales y cómo jugar, hacer las tareas, o lavar su propia ropa. Muy a menudo nos fatigamos cuando sentimos que se demora meses enseñarles a los niños lo que queremos. Nos equivocamos cuando creemos que los dolores del trabajo del parto terminan después del nacimiento, pero, a veces, cuando uno tiene en brazos un bebé que no puede quedarse dormido, o un niño triste de tres años que ha mordido a la mitad de los niños en su guardería infantil, uno se da cuenta que el trabajo acaba de comenzar. Sin embargo, la repetición es la verdadera profesora y no un síntoma del fracaso. Debemos estar conscientes que nuestros niños se demorarán en convertirse en verdaderos expertos en su nueva conducta.

Sea un buen modelo

Todos queremos que nuestros niños no solamente nos escuchen sino que aprendan de nosotros. Esto requiere cuidado especial - tenemos que respetar a nuestra familia porque esto verdaderamente se aprende a través del ejemplo. Podemos ser respetuosos de los sentimientos de nuestros niños ("Sé que estás enojado con tú hermana porque te quitó el juguete y lo rompió") y ser claros que su conducta es inaceptable ("Pero no está permitido pegarle"). Podemos estar molestos con sus actos ("Cómo pudiste tomar los lápices y rallar las murallas") y aún poder ayudar y ser astuto con nuestra respuesta ("Ahora qué se que eres muy inteligente para desordenar, te voy a enseñar a limpiar").

La felicidad pasajera está sobreestimada

Los padres que creen que la medida del éxito es la felicidad inmediata de sus niños pueden estar embarcados en un viaje largo y azaroso. Los niños no están felices aprendiendo a como usar la bacinica, pero esto les dará más independencia. La escuela los angustiará al principio pero crecer es algo realmente provechoso. Trabajar duro para terminar un proyecto puede ser frustrante, pero la satisfacción de un trabajo bien hecho es muy fuerte. Aprender es un trabajo difícil y a veces estamos tan asustados del fastidio de nuestro niños que nos olvidamos enseñarles que el orgullo de sus esfuerzos da gran satisfacción. La manera fácil, cuando como padres hacemos concesión tras concesión como resultado de lagrimas y de pataletas, puede hacer nuestra tarea más difícil a largo plazo.

Flexibilidad y Consistencia

En cuanto a las reglas de seguridad, debe haber 100% de consistencia y vigilancia-un niño nunca debe jugar con fuego, estar solo en un carro, o sin vigilancia en la tina de baño. Nunca debemos ser débiles sobre las reglas que pueden ayudar a salvar las vidas de nuestros hijos. Habiendo dicho esto, debo decir que mis hijos sí han comido helados en vez de cena, comido su almuerzo en un carro del supermercado, gemido en la caja porque quieren un juguete (y lo obtuvieron), y ciertamente se han acostado sin lavarse los dientes. La flexibilidad sobre las reglas en realidad nos ayuda a nosotros y nuestros hijos pensar en cómo usar buen juicio. A veces pueden acostarse más tarde porque la abuela está de visita durante las vacaciones y es un placer tener su compañía. Y a veces la lección que se aprende es tener compasión, como cuando le ofrecemos a nuestra hermana limpiar ya que ella está agotada después de una derrota de fútbol.

Ser padres es más difícil de lo que la mayoría de nosotros creíamos, pero ser buenos observadores de nosotros mismos y de nuestros hijos y tener conciencia que crecer puede ser doloroso puede ayudar a aliviar algunas de las preocupaciones que sentimos sobre como hacerlo correctamente.

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(212) 569-6475

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
GUIDANCE CENTER

Publisher:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center
Managing Editor
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Editor
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Layout and Design
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Illustrations
Susan Eaddy
Parent and preschooler Newsletter
ISSN 0887-0365
Published Monthly
For a subscription, send payment to:
North Shore Child & Family Guidance/Parent & preschooler
480 Old Westbury Road
Roslyn Hgts., N.Y. 11577-2215
U.S.Phone: 1-800-595-9365
Phone: (516) 626-1971
Fax: (516) 626-8043
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
(U.S., Canada, Mexico)
English Language Edition
One Year -- US$30
English/Spanish Language
One Year -- US$40
Other Countries Add $12 Postage Per Year.
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